1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

ported here. The origin of the Santal is attributed to a goose (*hās*; Hindi, *hamsa* = gander) and a gander (*hāsil*; Hindi, *hamsa* = gander) which were made out of grass seeds (*sirom*) or lived in such grass. With the assistance of the deity known by the Bengali terms *Ṭhakur* or *Mahaprobu* or *Ṭhakur-Mahaprobu*, or by the Santali *Maraṅ Buru* (literally "Great Mountain") the two eggs of the pair became the first "humans," i.e., Santal or *hoṛ*. Like many other tribal peoples, the Santal refer to themselves as "people" (*hoṛ*). Since there were no others, these two, in spite of being siblings, had to mate. It is said that Thakur had to teach them how to make rice beer (*Haṇdi*) at this time so that they would get drunk since they were ashamed to have intercourse when sober, especially since they were siblings. There is often a lengthy account of the places to which this pair traveled, and the offspring they had at various places are named. Hihiri and Pipiri are always included prominently in these travels. The two ancestors are named Pilcu Haram and Pilcu Buḍhi (Hindi, *Hār* = bone) (Hindi, *Buḍhi* = old and/or wise), and they are said to have divided their offspring into twelve clans on the basis of various adventures. Sometimes these adventures are connected with the clan name and totemic food abstinence. The one occasion on which I heard a full account of the myth, unsolicited, was at a wedding, and it is clear from my inquiries that few present knew as much of the myth as was then recited.

The essential features of this myth are shared with the Ho and Munda, two closely related tribes speaking related Mundari languages and inhabiting territories adjacent to the Santal, or living intermingled with them. Other points of overlap between the Santal and these neighboring tribes will be indicated in this chapter.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

the Santal" as Culshaw properly describes him.[4] Other "nationally" shared deities of the Grove are *Jaherera*, *Liṭa*, *Gōsāe Era* (Hindi: *Gosain* = pious one), *Mōṛeko* (the Five) and *Tureko* (the Six).*

Marañ Buru is regarded as a kind of chief deity, though that honor is sometimes ascribed to Cando (literally "moon," as in Hindi, *chand*) or Siń-Cando (sun-moon) to Ṭhakur, etc. The great variety of names associated almost haphazardly with the notion of "chief" or "biggest" deity is consistent with the acephalous Santal social structure. Nevertheless the Santal do manifest tribal solidarity, and though every house, local lineage, etc., has its own deities, Marañ Buru always receives his portion of sacrifices, gift offerings and prayer. This constitutes another link between the Santal and other Mundari tribes of the region, who share most of these deities.

Sinha has characterized Indian tribals as conceiving of the good life as one with "ample scope for indulgence in pleasure, while maintaining social obligations to corporate group or groups" (Sinha 1959:309). Culshaw similarly begins his chapter on "Dancing, Music, and Poetry" with the comment that the word "*raṣka* meaning 'pleasure' is often on the lips of the Santal, and it is dear to their hearts."[5] One could hardly begin such a chapter differently, for the traditional sense of the word "pleasure" (*raṣka*) makes it virtually synonymous with dancing

---

[4] Culshaw, *ibid.*

* *Jaherera* is sometimes called *Jaher Buḍhi* ("Old Lady of the Sacred Grove") and is said to be the consort of Marañ Buru. *Liṭa* is prominent in hunting rites; the rainbow is referred to as the "bow of *Liṭa*." As for the Five and Six, not even the most erudite of the Santal seem to have any knowledge of them other than when they are to receive offerings and prayer.

[5] Culshaw, *ibid.*, 39.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

and singing, playing and listening to music, eating festively, drinking rice beer, and implicitly sexual activity; in practice, these are the activities characteristic of a Santal festival. When a traditional and typically uneducated Santal meets another from a distant region, one of the first questions asked will be, "How is pleasure in your region?" The reply will focus on the activities mentioned above. Indeed, the only occasion in which I observed a fully sober Santal male adult burst into tears was during such a festive event. When I asked the old man why he was weeping at such a time, he replied, "The sounds of the drum remind me of the pleasure of my youth and of my deceased wife who shared in my pleasure." It will be recalled that it was rice beer which enabled the propagation of the Santal to proceed in the beginning of things, and if there is one word which is more frequently uttered than any other, more frequent even than the sound of festive drums, it is the cry of "*haṇḍi, haṇḍi haṇḍi*" (rice beer; from *handia*, Hindi = an earthenware container). As the Santal sing:

> Oh "flower friend"*
> I am thirsty and I am hungry;
> But hearing the sound of the drums under the canopy†
> My thirst and hunger are banished.

The Santal pleasure complex is of primary importance in considering recent economic and political events, but here the concern is with "pleasure" as a shared understanding serving the solidarity of the Santal. As the Santal think of it, "pleasure"

* A "flower friend" or *phul* (as in Hindi *phul* = flower) is a formally celebrated ritual friendship.

† The "canopy" or *chamda* is utilized in wedding ceremonies to cover the area in which the ceremony takes place.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

619 [175] have achieved. For the traditional Santal, membership in the tribe constitutes the widest bond of social identification. This is true even though as far back as historical records extend (to the early nineteenth century), the Santal have not been politically unified. Beneath the level of the somewhat nebulous tribe there are interpenetrating territorial and kinship organizations.

[634] [192] Territorially, the largest formally organized unit is the *Pargana* (Hindi = a subdivision of a district), a loose confederation of approximately a dozen villages bound together to settle certain judicial questions. Its proceedings are conducted by a "Chief" [621] (*Parganath* in Bengali or *Desh-Pradhān* in Hindi). The village (*ato*) is the only other formally organized territorial unit and is often divided into sections (*tola* in Hindi). Village "Chiefs" [622] [792] [192] are known as *Mąñjhi* or *Pradhān* (Hindi = Headman); other village officials include an "Assistant Chief" or "Chiefs" (*Jog-mąñjhi*) and a "Village Priest" (*Naeke*).

614 [192] The widest separate kinship unit is the "Clan" (*Pąris:* or *Jāti,** Hindi = Caste). According to the Santal creation myth there should be twelve clans; in fact there appear to be only nine. Clan membership, like all inheritance, is determined patrilineally. Containing thousands of members, the clan is, of course, a fictitious kinship unit; apart from bearing a name and the presumption of some common rituals performed by its constituent local lineages, the clan has few "likenesses" to bind it together and does not exist as a corporate unit. The clan is, nonetheless, an exogamous social entity which serves as a reference point establishing kinship relations among all Santal. Santal unable to trace "actual" common relatives can establish their kin relationship via the clan; for example, a non-kin of the same sex and same clan might be regarded as a brother,

* *Jāti* is also used by the Santal to refer to the tribe as a unit.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

614 or an older man of one's mother's clan might be regarded as mother's brother.

The kinship groups within the clan are the sub-clan,* the local lineage, and the extended family, all of which are patrilineal. Each of the many sub-clans within a clan bears a distinctive name, and marriage within the sub-clan is even more severely punished than marriage within the clan. While smaller than the clan it also has thousands of members and is perforce a fictitious kinship group, though on occasion many members within a range of several hundred square miles will assemble for a sub-clan ceremony. The local lineage is a group of patrilineal male kinsmen living within a few miles of one another, periodically worshiping as a unit, and gathering together on such occasions as marriages and funerals. It is the largest cor-
596 porate group within the kinship system. The patrilineal, patrilocal extended family is a distinctive economic and ritual social unit which often occupies a single house-site, though common residence and economic unity seldom are maintained after the death of the father of the family or the marriage of all of his sons. The nuclear families which together compose the extended family are, as elsewhere, distinguishable units and provide the lines of fracture by which the extended family divides itself.

[192] * In the literature the sub-clans are referred to as *khūt*, but I found that throughout the territory of the southern Santal there is no such term; in fact, there is no word which designates "sub-clan." To find out which sub-clan a Santal belongs to, it is necessary first to determine his clan and then to place the interrogative "what" (*cili*) before the name of his clan, e.g., *cili Hansdak*! Casual inquiry among the northern Santal indicates that the same condition prevails there. It is possible that the word *khūt* is a mistranscription of *khond*, which refers to the ceremonial circles which Santal draw and indirectly to the local lineage; in this usage one refers to those who worship "at a single circle" (*mit khondren*). But it is not possible to ask a Santal, "What *khond* do you belong to?"

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

614 to the sub-clan, one may presume that the large size of the typical sub-clan and its necessary dispersion prevent the assembling of anything more than a very limited part of its membership. This is certainly the case among the southern Santal, though I have been told that on a few occasions members of a sub-clan have assembled within a territory as broad as the whole district of Mayurbhanj. But such meetings are difficult to arrange and so costly that they cannot be frequent.

The named sub-clan, like the clan, serves to orient kin relations, and as mentioned, enables strangers to be taken into the bosom of a functioning local lineage. It is also the exogamous unit par excellence, i.e., marriage within the sub-clan is unthinkable incest while marriage within the clan, though it is forbidden and usually punished, is a much less serious offense. This difference reflects the much larger size of the clan, the relative weakness of its internal connections, and the lack of "likenesses" within its far-flung organization.

613 But it is the local lineage which has a truly corporate character, though this corporateness is largely confined to ceremonial activity. The members of this unit share common "house
613 776 deities" (*orak' boṅga* = house deity) and ancestral spirits, and they celebrate these together at about two- to six-year intervals.
782 These celebrations, in which all male members of the local
• [192] lineage join together, are held in fields and known as "field worship" (*thandi boṅga* = field deity). Each local lineage has its own distinctive ritual practices, and these practices tend to be kept in considerable secrecy, often being held in fields remote from any village and at hours when villagers are likely to be asleep. Some lineages maintain that anyone viewing their ritual offerings at "field worship" will be stricken ill and die. Still, a number of local lineages invite a few non-lineage members

613 to participate in a prescribed way in this ceremony; in particu-
776 lar they are often asked to become "possessed" (*rum*) and rep-
782 resent either the spirits of the ancestors and/or Marañ Buru, the chief deity of the Santal. It is these spirits, representing as they do the unity of the Santal and the local lineage respectively, that must give their approval of the food and other offerings presented to them by the lineage. Non-members thus serve as properly objective outsiders in making this judgment, even though it is done in a state of "possession" in which they are the vehicles of the deity and spirits. It is interesting that these outsiders are frequently mother's brothers or other relatives of a woman married into the lineage; in this way the affinal connections of the local lineage are also given recognition in this ceremony.

The expressions of the Santal regarding this rite indicate that feelings of strength and bravery within the solidary lineage are closely associated with the rites performed. As one Santal put it, "Field worship is of hero Gods; by worshipping them, courage and bravery are gained by the members of the sub-lineage." Another Santal added, "Nowadays there is no warfare, but these deities are true as anything"; a third then related a famous tale of two Santal heroes who were of his sub-clan.

764 "Field worship" is inextricably intertwined with certain
[192] funerary rites (*bhaṇḍan*; Hindi: *Bhāṇḍa* = an earthen vessel)
[782] which are prerequisites for both "field worship" and marriage
[613] rites. Representatives of the local lineage must perform the *bhaṇḍan* after the death of any member. Among the northern
[484] Santal these rites are generally performed at the Damodar
[184] River; some of the southern Santal also journey to the Damodar

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

622 the approval of the villagers with whom he is associated; he
628 presides generally at disputes which cannot be settled within
692 a particular village, at inter-village disputes or at discussions of custom which are of concern to the entire set of villages under his jurisdiction; like the headman of a village, he is at most *primus inter pares.* Publicly he is little more than the voice of consensus, though privately his influence is that of an especially respected and powerful person.

69 The "justice" of the Santal, i.e., their institutionalized prac-
[577] tices as distinct from the desires of injured parties, places a strong premium on rendering decisions which will restore severed relationships and permit life to return to what it was
[681] before the dispute. The fee to the "court" is often as substantial as a judgment and must be paid by both parties. There is almost always encouragement to settle "out of court" by friends and officials. Fees paid to the "court" are generally spent to buy rice beer and viands so that after the bitterness of the contest both court and contestants join together in "pleasure," and all
• [192] is as it was. These gatherings to settle disputes within the village are usually called "discussions" (*galmarao*); multi-village gatherings are known as *dorbar* (Hindi, *dorbar* = court).

584 Besides the judicial tie, each village is bound to a number of
621 others by marriage. Marriage procedures will be discussed at length but it is appropriate here to note that marriage is arranged with the aid of villagers and village officials as well as those associated by kinship and is of great interest and concern to the whole village. The ceremonies of marriage dramatize this concern, reflecting village solidarity in gaining and accepting a daughter or sorrowfully giving one up, as the case may be.

63 Beyond the multi-village judicial organization there are no
184 formally organized territorial units: however, regional cultural

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

63
184 variation and specialization do exist even though there are few sharp boundary lines. There is one regular social event
224 which reflects and intensifies regional cultural and social inter-
628 connection; this event is an annual hunt followed by a large all-male gathering outside some village where performances largely humorous and/or "obscene" (in their eyes as well as mine) take place. The participants consist of teams generally from several villages within a vicinity, and they compete with other similarly constituted teams for the favor of the assembled
[273] throng. Like many such gatherings, it terminates with rice beer.

In most of the territory occupied by the southern Santal, game is so scarce that the hunting aspect of this yearly event has become *pro forma*. After the hunt and its rituals, the various teams proceed in a march-dance parade through different villages as they make their way toward the final gathering place
[534] where performances will be held. Vigorous drum-beating marks
[535] the progress of their procession, and the characteristic Santal male strutting in dance is particularly pronounced. Any game
[192] that has been shot is borne aloft on pole stretchers. The entire event is known as *Sendra*.

[692] Several of my informants as well as the literature maintain that serious discussions of Santal customs and even settling of disputes that have escaped solution within the judicial units occur after the hunt. This was not the case at the one *Sendra* I attended. However this may be, the *Sendra* remains the largest and territorially the widest gathering of Santal, sometimes bringing together more than a thousand Santal living within a radius of about fifty miles.

Still to be considered are the intertwined components of the
596 extended and nuclear family. The term "extended family" is
592 unfortunately one which has often been used very loosely; it

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

592
596 seven) were extended in the sense of consisting of an undivided family of three generations with pooled income. There were also five households in which a mother had moved in with one of her divided married sons. The mere fact that the average life span of the Santal is relatively short and the fact that families generally fracture after the father's death are sufficient to account for the preponderance of the nuclear family.

592 Each economically undivided family has a part of the house set apart for the purpose of worship and sometimes also for the storing of rice and other valuables. A wall extending nearly
• [192] across the house divides the largest room of the house in two; it is the smaller portion which is set apart, and it is known as
592 the "inner room" (*bhitar*; inside, as in Hindi). On almost all
769 festivals, offerings of rice beer are made here to the patrilineal
[192] ancestors, accompanied by prayers asking that the family be spared sickness (*handi bonga* = rice beer worship). At this offering the head of the household usually presides, accompanied by one or more male relatives. Offerings may be brought by females of the household if they are not menstruating at the time, but females not of the household may never enter on the grounds that "one never knows their condition." "Rice beer worship," with its offerings to the ancestors, is obviously expressive of the bonds within the extended family, but *Maraṅ Buru*, the tribal deity, also receives his offering during ancestor worship, expressing the unity of the tribe.

556 Aside from the interconnected strands of kinship and territory, there is another socially relevant characteristic—wealth. As a social marker, like the inheritance of tribal offices, it provides social positions not attainable by all in the normal life
[581] process. Much will be said of its divisive effects later; it is appropriate to note here that it operates in establishing mar-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

External Solidarity

175 Though the Santal demands which preceded the rebellion
648 were limited to relieving their economic plight, the preparations
669 for the rebellion and certain events during its course suggest a more radical intent. For example, two brothers, Sido and Kanhu, proclaimed to their fellow Santal that they had supernaturally received a message to worship *Suba Thakur* (Hindi = Head of a District), presumably a deity associated with the political leadership of a District on the analogy of traditional Santal village and Pargana deities; the brothers claimed that *Suba Thakur* had urged them to lead the Santal people in a rebellion. They announced "We will kill and make an end of all the Deko,* rule ourselves, and whoever does not listen, show him a sword."[9] As the author of a settlement report put it, "A deeper or at any rate a supervening cause [for the rebellion] was the Sonthal yearning for independence, a dream of the ancient days when they had no overlords."[10]

At least those who led the rebellion foresaw in victory not only economic relief but increased political power and an opportunity to improve the rank of the Santal. The goal of rank improvement is suggested by a number of ritual practices emulative of Hindu customs which accompanied the rebellion, such as putting on the sacred thread, ritual use of sun-dried rice and oil and vermilion, and purification with cow dung.[11] While wishing to triumph over the oppressive Hindus, the Santal thought of cashing in on the victory with the traditional Hindu symbols of rank. This ambivalence toward the Hindus is a constant characteristic of Santal-Hindu relations.

[192]

* *Deko*, or *Diku*, as it is pronounced in the south, is a term of opprobrium for foreigners, particularly Hindus.

[9] Culshaw and Archer 1945:2.

[10] McPherson from Culshaw and Archer, *ibid.*

[11] Culshaw and Archer 1945.

Nonetheless, elite Santal were somewhat more Hinduized

177 556 than their poorer fellows. Some managed to attract a coterie of high-caste but often impoverished Hindus. One hears of wealthy Santal who spent considerable sums on such associates during trips to and attendance at Hindu festivals. Some who were village headmen or Parganaths (multi-village headmen) established enduring relations with the Mahārājā or local zemindar of their region. These Santal often were given responsibility for tax collection, in return for which they kept a portion and received grants of land.

177 608 648 The Santal have long followed the practice of establishing among themselves, and with other castes, permanent bonds of a kinship type, which are given public recognition in a "flower" (*phul*; Santali and Hindi =flower) ceremony. In some instances an elite family managed to establish such a tie with a Brahman family while ordinary Santal contracted such relations only with other tribals or Hindus of very low caste. *This contact contributed to differential emulation of Hindu practices.* Some of the traditional elite among the southern Santal abandoned beef-eating and cow sacrifice; some affected the dress of high-caste Hindus; a few demanded an end to "capture marriage" (*itut' bapla*) because they did not wish to have close relations with unwealthy families of low status. Though their success in getting the non-elite to follow their Hinduized practices was limited, a certain degree of culture difference was established, to the detriment of solidarity.

[192] [583]

177 However, as the historical evidence indicates and as any contemporary observer could infer, contact with Hindu society has been long and/or intensive, and that portion of Santal culture shared by all Santal is so marked with Hindu traits that it would be a monumental task to indicate all of them. All Santal call on neighboring Hindus of low caste to deliver babies.

[759]

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF ABORIGINE PUPILS*

Year	*Number*
1924–25	4,801
1925–26	5,221
1926–27	5,569
1927–28	5,874
1928–29	6,140
1929–30	6,111
1930–31	6,068
1931–32	6,244
1932–33	6,730
1933–34	6,555
1934–35	6,569
1935–36	6,618
1936–37	6,466
1937–38	6,877
1938–39	8,473

is such a potent cultural divider that social relations are generally unintelligible today without knowledge of the education of the participants. In conversation, the Santal constantly differentiate people according to whether they are "educated-literate" (*paraoc'*; Hindi: *parna* = to read) or "ignorant-illiterate" (*murukh*; Hindi = ignorant). Education and literacy not only confer social prestige; they also produce a qualitatively different kind of Hinduization than the casual acceptance of a

* (Mukherjea) While it is true that there are other "aborigines" in Mayurbhanj, the Santal are the largest of such groups, and there is no reason to think they have contributed a disproportionately small share to these totals. Unfortunately there are no later figures available, nor are there comparable figures for Singhbhum.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 554 871 181 house, he is like a *Diku*; before him I feel like a black Santal." I have heard other Santal remark that they could not sing or talk freely before a certain educated Santal who was a village leader because his bearing made them ill at ease. It seems particularly difficult to carry on the normal "pleasure" activities such as dancing, singing, drinking, and even convivial conversation, before such august Santal. The same gap seen from the vantage point of the educated is expressed in the following remarks of an educated woman:

> I am happy now to be living in the city because both my child and I were sick from "envy" [i.e., being "envied" by others] when we lived in the *bustee*; all are healthy here. I never danced or sang in the village though I liked to watch; my mother and sister danced but I didn't. When very young I did, but after I started going to school, I didn't. Some don't send their children to school because others will have "envy" and say that highly educated girls will be outcasted for marrying into other castes; that is not true. Why shouldn't we study as high as money allows? *Diku* girls do.

[192] Less eloquent educated Santal simply explain matters by saying that they have become "embarrassed" (*lajao*) to dance, sing, etc.

177 871 If differential Hinduization is the major component of the gap created by education, it is not the only component. An additional divisive effect of education is that it gives the student a secular orientation which is highly differentiating but of limited effect since only those with college educations acquire it thoroughly. There are various manifestations of this orientation, but a particularly interesting example which I have discussed elsewhere[1] concerns differences in beliefs about witch-

177 754 871 184

[1] Orans 1959.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

121 tribal peoples has been most marked, special circumstances attend the disruptions. In most of Africa, money wages and industrial work have been accompanied by the separation of the wage worker from his village, with his consequent removal from the sanctions and social controls of the tribal society."[3]

121 177 166 The pronounced cultural and social changes observed among the Santal should add to the evidence indicating the significance of migration. In addition the microscopic form of anthropological inquiry used with the Santal reveals something more of the *modus operandi* of migration to industrial employment than can be seen at the macroscopic level at which Weber operated.

Traditional Marriage Forms

177 184 583 The Santal have a number of legitimate or quasi-legitimate forms of marriage. It is the manner in which a marriage is contracted, i.e., whether or not it is arranged, and the way in which it is celebrated, which define the form. The various forms are graded by cost and elaboration of the ceremonies performed, and differ significantly in the ceremonial content. There are relatively few arranged marriages among Santal industrial workers living in *bustees* as compared to those among the Santal living in their traditional native villages. The results of my research into this difference indicate that it is the result of migration to industrial employment, that the shift to unarranged marriages among the workers is the result of weakened bonds with both kin and villages, and finally that this is the result of neither migration nor industrial employment singly, but rather of the two together.

583 192 177 The marriage form with the highest prestige and involving the greatest expenditure is known as *duar itut' sindur* ("placing

[3] Nash 1958:113.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

177 583 [192] vermilion on the bride at the door"), *duar bapla* ("door marriage"), or *Diku bapla* ("Hindu marriage"); henceforth it shall be referred to as *DB*. All these names call attention to the fact that in this form, as distinct from all others, vermilion is applied to the bride before the door of the bride's house rather than the groom's. The term *Diku bapla* reminds one in addition that application of vermilion at the bride's house is the Hindu custom, while in all other forms of marriage it is applied at the groom's house. It also points to the fact that this form generally involves more Hindu traits than any other. Unlike the other forms, a proper *DB* requires the hiring of a Hindu band and dancers, and the performance, before the application of vermilion, of the marriage of the bride to a tree, a rite which is practiced by many neighboring Hindu castes. The *DB*, like other arranged marriages, allows the couple if they are mature to give or withhold consent before marriage arrangements are completed. Such consent is almost always forthcoming, for a Santal girl rarely dares to go against her parents' wishes. Nearly all the inhabitants of both the bride's and groom's village are involved in the marriage ceremony and ensuing activities. A large party from the groom's village accompanies the groom to the village of his bride. Tradition requires his family to hire from some Hindu caste (usually Harijans or members of other castes of low status) a number of men to carry the groom on a palanquin to the bride's house; a Hindu dancing girl and entertainers ought also to be part of the entourage. Today, if the groom happens to be a TISCO worker returning to his village to have a *DB* marriage, he may be borne by a hired taxi instead. One such worker imported for the occasion, a hired wagon equipped with a phonograph and loud speakers, thereby enabling his rural brethren to listen

177 585 [192] [495] [533]

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

583 riage is fixed at two cows if the bride's father is living, and one if he is dead. Additional payments made by the groom's guardians include the presentation of dhotis to the bride's guardians and to a number of her co-villagers; the cost of these gifts is not fixed but will be greater in a *DB* than in any other form of marriage. The really heavy costs, however, stem from the necessity of transporting and feeding the large party which accompanies the groom's party to the bride's village, hiring the palanquin-bearers or taxi, as the case may be, and providing rice beer for all one's own villagers as well as food for many visitors and relatives from other villages. In a *DB* the groom's guardians may invite a few Hindu acquaintances, whose presence would enhance their Santal host's prestige. Hindus are seldom invited to other forms except occasionally to the second highest form. The total cost of a *DB* in 1957 was Rs. 800–1,500, or, at the going price for rice, 3,200–6,000 lbs.

177 184 583 That the highest, most expensive, and socially most exclusive form (*DB*) tends to be practiced only by the elite Santal, who are also the most Hinduized, is a reflection of the greater acculturation of the elite; it also reflects the general concession of rank to the Hindus, since all Santal regard the *DB* as the highest form.

583 [192] The second most expensive and prestigeful form of marriage ceremony is the *saṅge bariat* (*saṅge* = many; *bariat* = groom's party; Hindi: *barat* = groom's party). *SB* suggests by its name that like the *DB* it is an arranged marriage involving important and numerous people who accompany the groom to the village of the bride. In bride-price and other gifts and exchanges, it requires about the same expenditure as a *DB*; but since the number of people invited to partake of food and rice beer in both the groom's and bride's village is not so many as in a *DB*, and

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

583 since the groom is not borne on a palanquin accompanied by hired singers and dancers, the total cost is considerably reduced. The critical ceremonial difference is that, unlike the Hindu practice of the *DB*, the vermilion is applied in front of the house [178] of the groom. This difference, which holds for all the lesser forms as well, is indicative of the generally less Hinduized ritual of the non-*DB* forms. The total cost of an *SB* is Rs. 200–500, or 800–2,000 lbs. of rice.

[192] The least prestigeful and least expensive of arranged marriages is known as *ṭunki dipil* (*TD*) (*ṭunki* = small basket; *dipil* = carried on the head), "A Small Basket Carried on the Head," or *haṛam baṛiaṭ*, "A Groom's Party of Old Men." Most Santal say that these two names refer to the same form, but a few insist that the latter is a slightly more elaborate form. For the purpose at hand it will be adequate to treat them as identical. The name "Small Basket Carried on the Head" suggests that the bride's possessions and gifts are so few as to be portable on her head; the name "A Groom's Party of Old Men" suggests that the groom's party consists only of a few old men. A *TD* is simply an attenuated form of *SB*, with vermilion similarly applied at the groom's home. The obligation to pay bride-price is weaker and payment is frequently postponed until long after the marriage ceremony; often the debt is never settled. The total cost of a *TD* is generally Rs. 25–100, or 100–400 lbs. of rice.

[192] In addition to the three forms of arranged marriage, and unlike their Hindu neighbors, the Santal have a legitimate traditional form of unarranged or "love marriage" known as *ńapam bapla* (*NB*), "To Meet or Come Together Marriage," or more simply as *ńapam* "To Meet or Come Together." In practice this form may include public announcement, bride-price, and a

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

369 There are a few observations concerning ceremonial practice
796 which apply to all the city Santal (excluding, of course, those
[822] who live in town *bustees*). We have seen that the city Santal
[778] are not even a community to the degree that the *bustee* Santal
[793] are; they do not, for the most part, live side-by-side, they have no headman or priest and they have no Sacred Grove in which to assemble for community worship. The practice of community worship is ruled out for lack of physical facilities, but as we have seen from our examination of the *bustee*, there is little reason to think that their presence would be sufficient to maintain ceremonial practice and participation at the level obtained in rural villages.

342 What is most striking about the city Santal is that they do
369 not practice ancestor worship in their Company houses. Their
769 explanation of this, with a little elaboration, appears to me to be an adequate one. They say, "Who knows whose houses these were before we got here—they are not our houses. That
[192] is why we do not worship here." It will be recalled that ancestor worship is performed behind a wall dividing off a portion of the main room of the house and known as "inside" (*bhitar*; Santali and Hindi = "inside"). The same word is used to refer to secret rites and deities of a family and of a local lineage, i.e., when a question touches on such things they will say you are asking an "inside" question. It will also be recalled that this "inside" portion of the house must be guarded against pollution by menstruating women. Since it is not permissible to erect such a wall within a company house, again physical facilities in the city render traditional practice difficult. But more than the particular difficulty of lack of a wall, there is a
[783] general question of pollution. Not only does the company house not provide a proper sanctuary for the "inside" rites of

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF SANTAL RETURNED AS HINDU
(Census of India 1931)*

	1901	1911	1921	1931
Orissa	44	46	43	48
Chota Nagpur Feudatory States (Seraikela, Kharswan)		0	18	48
Singhbhum	16	3	56	23

tion of villages which follow distinctively Hindu religious practices. I have heard of only one Santal village within the territory occupied by the southern Santal which has abandoned traditional forms of worship and become thoroughly Hinduized. In 1916 Roy reported the conversion to Hinduism of a number of Santal in a Hindu village in Orissa; they were served by an outcast Brahman priest.[1] I met only one Santal who had taken up Hindu religious practices, and he lived in the city of Jamshedpur. Nowhere that I went were Santal served by Brahmans, though in some areas Santal families are occasionally visited by members of the Potkar caste, who bring messages from the dead for a fee. The Santal also employ females of various low Hindu castes to deliver their children and sometimes patronize Hindu practitioners of traditional medicine (*Kubraj*; Hindi).

It is true that until recently the Santal in large numbers took part, in their own way, in various Hindu festivals. At many of the major Hindu festivals the Santal would assemble for mixed dancing, and some would become possessed and speak

* More recent census figures do not contain this information because "caste has been abolished" as a legal entity.

[1] Roy, 1916.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

innovative patterns are also arising, particularly through the fusing of traditional and Hindu patterns.

I do not want to portray this striking cultural development as more profane than it is by giving undue emphasis to its connections with political objectives and pursuit of rank. Nevertheless, one must begin by recognizing that this is its source. As very grossly advocated by a somewhat naïve Santal industrial worker who has become a "Member of the Legislative Assembly," the movement is spoken of in the following terms: "We should not leave our religion; we should continue to use rice beer; we should have our worship at the Sacred Grove; also we should not stop eating beef. If we stop eating it our Santal caste will be gone. We will call our religion *Sarna Dhorom** and will tell everyone that our religion is *Sarna Dhorom*." Another Santal entered the conversation saying, "Yes, like Mussulman *Dhorom*, Christian *Dhorom*, so we will call ours *Sarna Dhorom*." A third Santal said, "Yes, if we say *Santal Dhorom*, that is our caste; as the Christians have a church, so our 'temple' (*mandir*; Hindi) is the Sacred Grove." The MLA brought the conversation to a close and down to "practical" matters by saying: "We will maintain our 'drama club'; we will keep our 'culture'; if we keep our 'culture' the government will give us money; if you do a drama I will bring big officers of the Jharkhand party to see."

There are sections of Jharkhand political rallies with such a concentration on culture that one might imagine himself at a festival rather than a political meeting. The local club may perform a play at such a meeting; traditional dances may be

* *Sarna* is the Munda word for "Sacred Grove" (*Jaher* in Santali); *Dhorom* is the Oriya form meaning roughly "religion."

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 754 virtuous life and to adhere scrupulously to the traditional religious practices.

668 Ragnath Murmu is one of the founders of a cultural organization known as *Sarna Dharam Semlet'*, i.e., Sacred Grove Religious Organization. This organization, which today is a spearhead of the cultural movement, is an offshoot of the Jharkhand party. It was established before the census of 1951 for the purpose of persuading the tribals of the region to return their religion as "*Sarna*." Just as Hindu organizations like Arya Samaj pressure for Hindu returns as a sign of national solidarity, so Semlet' was created to show the solidarity of tribals. The battle over cultural identification is waged by both sides but it is social identification which is chiefly at stake. Though Semlet' began its campaign only a short time before the 1951 census was taken, 237,310 tribals from the state of Bihar did return themselves as followers of the "*Sarna*" religion (Census of India, Vol. V. Bihar, Part II, A Tables, p. 309). There is, [192] of course, no native word in any of the tribal languages which designates their religion, and the word *Sarna*, meaning Sacred Grove in Munda, has had to be officially chosen for the purpose. Since it is not even the word for Sacred Grove in Santali or Ho, it faces further difficulties, and if it is to be widely adopted it will require a good deal of explaining, especially to the mass of non-literate Santal and Hos.

[754] Whatever its success in the census, under the leadership of Ragnath Murmu the organization has taken on a number of cultural functions, such as propagating Mr. Murmu's theory of witchcraft. While its chief ideologist is Mr. Murmu, its treasurer and secretary are TISCO workers. Among the officers only the secretary is illiterate, a deficiency for which he makes

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

668 up by being an ecstatic religious teacher known widely for his curing powers.

• 192 668 776 792 In the words of Esteemed Guru (*Guru Gomke*), a title conferred upon Ragnath Murmu by Jai Pal Singh, who is himself called Great Esteemed One (*Maraṅ Gomke*), the purpose of Semlet' "is to teach the people to live peaceably with belief in the deities." The Guru has had some success in spreading the notion that Dhormo is the one all-embracing deity of which all others are a part, a theory like that of Vedantic monism. The socially centrifugal tendency of such a theory is, however, ingeniously mitigated by deriving the word Dhormo from the Santali terms, *doho* = to protect, *Hor* = a way, and *om* = to capture; hence "where there is a way of salvation" (salvation = *mafti*; Hindi). Thus the Guru makes *Dhormo*, a deity often worshipped along with the traditional ones, a Santal one after all. There is no end to the Guru's linguistic derivations of this variety, the scope of which is indicated by his derivation of Sanskrit from Proto-Mundari on the basis of structural similarities. Indeed, he argues that "many believe Valmiki Risi himself to have been a Santal."

539 668 792 The Guru has written a very long epic-heroic play, *Kherwar Bir*, which serves as a Santal equivalent of the Mahābhārata. The word *Kherwar* is an heroic designation for Santal; *Bir* means forest in Santali. The essence of the plot is that the Santal, then known as Kherwar and the possessors of a great kingdom, lose a war with a people who have the attributes of Hindus, the victors taking many members of the royal family prisoner. The Guru deftly reverses the usual Hindu pattern by having the Santals' opponents be cannibals prepared to eat their Santal prisoners. Fortunately, a young Kherwar prince, following the call of duty in spite of great danger, succeeds in

[p. 3]

I. THE ANCESTORS' STORY

As the old Kolean has told it

Towards the rising of the sun (the East) was the birth of man. At first there was only water, and under the water there was earth. Then Ṭhạkur[1]-Jiu created the beings that live in water, the crab, the crocodile, the alligator, the raghoṗ boar fish, the soḷe prawn, the earthworm, the tortoise and others. 539

Thereupon Ṭhạkur said: "Whom shall I now make? I will make man". Then he decided to make two of earth. He had just finished making the two; then when he was going to give them souls (life) the Day-horse[2] came down from above, trampled them to pieces and left. Thakur became awfully grieved by this.

Then Ṭhạkur said: "I will not make them of earth; I shall make birds". Then he made the two Hãs Hạṣil birds[3] pulling (the material) off from his breast. He placed them on his hand; they were looking very beautiful. Thereupon he breathed on them, and they at once became alive and flew upwards. They moved about flying, but as they could not find a place to alight anywhere, they therefore always alighted on Ṭhạkur's hand. Then the Day-horse came down along the gossamer thread to drink water. When he was drinking water he spilt some froth of his mouth and left. It floated on the water; thereby foam was formed on the water.

Ṭhạkur then said to the two birds: "Do alight on the froth". They did so. When they had alighted they moved about over the whole sea, the froth carrying them along like a boat. Then they implored Ṭhạkur: "We are moving about, that is so, but we do not find any food".

Then Ṭhạkur-Jiu called the alligator: he came; and the alligator said to Ṭhạkur: "Why did you call me, Ṭhạkur?" Ṭhạkur said to him: "Would you be willing to bring up earth?" The alligator answered him: "If you tell me to do so, I might bring it up". Then having gone down in the water he was working bringing up earth; all was dissolved.

Thereupon Ṭhạkur called the prawn. He came. Having come he said to Ṭhạkur: "Why did you call me, Ṭhạkur?" Ṭhạkur said to him: "Would you be willing to bring up earth?" The prawn answered him: "If you tell me to do so, I might bring it up". Then

[1] lit. 'the Lord'. [2] The Sin sadom is mentioned only here and once below. Santals will connect the name with the sun. [3] Hãs is the Hindi name for goose or swan; hạṣil is the female. Other Munḍã peoples have a similar story; the Munḍãs have only one egg, out of which both the first human beings were hatched.

[192] [171]

where there was water, there he let sods be put, and in all places where water was bubbling up, there he let it be closed up by pressing pieces of rock down on it. 539

Thereupon, having made a nest in a clump of the sirom plants, the two birds laid two eggs. The female bird would sit on the eggs, and the male bird would find and bring food. Keeping on in this way they hatched the eggs: O mother! two human beings were born, one boy and one girl. Then both of them sang:

O dear dear, on the sea,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, have been brought into the world,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, where are they to be put?

O dear dear, you two please tell him,
O dear dear, the great Ṭhạkur Jiu,
O dear dear, the two have been brought into the world,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, where are they to be put?

So they implored Ṭhạkur saying: "How shall we two support these two human beings?" Ṭhạkur gave them some cotton and said to them: "Whatever you two eat, press the juice out of these things and make a place on the cotton wet therewith, and put this into their mouths to suck." By sucking and getting food in this way they grew and commenced to walk. But as they were growing the anxiety of the two birds increased, viz., where they should put the two when they grew up.

So they besought Ṭhạkur, and he said to them: "Do fly round and find for us a place for them to stay. Then they flew towards the setting of the sun; they discovered Hihiṛi Pipiṛi. Having returned they told Ṭhạkur of this. He said to them: "Do take them there". Then they took them along carrying them on their backs. They put them down and left them there. What became of Hās Hạsil, this the ancestors of old have not told us; therefore we do not know.

The names of these two human beings were Haṛam and Ayo[10]. Some people call them Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Buḍhi[11]. There in Hihiṛi Pipiṛi they grew up eating the grain of the sumtu bukuć grass and the ears of the sama grass[12]. They had no clothes, they were both naked; still they felt no shame, and they lived in great peace.

---

[10] Haṛam is the common word for an old or elderly man; Ayo means in Santali "mother", a word borrowed from an Aryan language. [11] Pilcu haṛam and Pilcu buḍhi are the common designations of the first parents. Haṛam is explained above; buḍhi is the common word for an elder, especially married woman; pilcu means "small, tiny". Buḍhi is an Aryan word. [12] The sumtu bukuć grass is Eleusine aegyptiaca, Purs., and sama grass Panicum colonum, L.

[192] [177] [137]

539 One day Liṭṣ[13] came to them and said to them: "Where are you, grandchildren? How are you? I am your grandfather; I have come to pay you a visit. I see you are well; but there is one great joy that you have not tasted. Do brew beer, it has a very sweet taste". Then he taught them to prepare the fermenting stuff. All three went to the forest. Liṭṣ showed them the roots. The two dug up and brought these. When they had brought them Liṭṣ said to Pilcu Buḍhi: "Now you make the rice wet for us". She did so. Having made it wet s'e pounded it into flour; they jabbed the "medicine" (fermenting stuff), they squeezed it and kneaded the flour with the "medicine"-juice; having kneaded it into a dough they made balls of it; having made the balls they put these into a basket together with straw and put this aside. When next day came, at the time they had made the balls, at the same time they uncovered them; having done this they threw the straw away and spread (the balls) out on a winnowing-fan; spread out there the balls became dry, and they put them aside. When this was done they gathered the sumtu bukuḍ and sama ears and pounded them. They boiled the grain and thereupon let it cool; when cooled they kneaded the fermenting stuff into it; thereupon having assembled all they covered it up in leaves and kept it there. In five days the fermentation was complete. In the afternoon they poured water on it. Then Liṭṣ said to them: "Now both of you drink this after first having poured on the ground some to Marañ buru. To-morrow I shall come again and visit you".

Thereupon they made three leaf-cups and filled these; having done this they poured on the ground the contents of one in the name of Marañ buru; then they drank themselves. When they were drinking, they commenced to toy amorously; continuing this they both drank all and also became very drunk. It became night, they lay down together.

When it became dawn Liṭṣ suddenly came. He called out to them: "How is it, grandchildren, have you got up or not? Do come out". When they had regained consciousness they recognized that they were both naked and felt very ashamed; therefore they answered him: "O grandfather, how can we possibly go out; we are awfully ashamed; we are both of us naked; last night when we had become drunk from beer, we have done something bad".

Liṭṣ then said to them: "It does not matter". And smiling to himself he went away. To cover their shame Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Buḍhi made a skirt and a loin-cloth for themselves of ficus-leaves. Now they got children, seven boys and seven girls. The name of the eldest boy was Saṇḍra, the one following him was Saṇḍhoṃ, the one after him was Care, the one following him was Mane, and the youngest one was Acaredelhu. The eldest girl was Chiṭṣ, the following Kapu, the one after her was Hisi, and one was Ḍumni. We have forgotten the names of the others.

[776 192] [13] Liṭṣ is said to be the real name of the principal hedge of the Santals, always referred to as Marañ buru, lit., the great mountain. Liṭṣ sē, the name for a rainbow.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

539

So they lived on; living on they grew up and became big. Haṛam on his side was in the habit of going with the boys to hunt in one direction, and in another direction Buḍhi on her side was going with the girls to pluck and bring vegetables and leaves, and when it became evening they used to come together at home. One day the young men went to Khaṇḍerae forest to hunt by themselves alone, and the girls also had gone alone to Sāṛākué[16] forest to pluck vegetables. When they had finished doing this, they came out at the foot of the Capakiṛ Fig tree[15] and were playing swinging on the pendulous roots of the Fig tree. Thereupon they shifted and commenced to dance ḍahar[18] and sang:

The ants, the ants swarm, O mother,
On the lower branches of the Capakiṛ Fig tree they swarm.

Having become tired from hunting the young men were coming out of the forest bringing a boi bindi deer[17] with them. Hearing the singing of the girls they said: "Listen you, who are singing?" Then they left the deer there and went to the girls and commenced to dance with them. Dancing along they became delighted. The eldest young man chose for himself the eldest girl and the youngest boy the youngest girl, and in this way all of them did. Thereupon the eldest young man and the eldest girl went to have a look at the deer. At that time the other ones sang:

Along under the Fig tree to the young deer,
O mother, quick to see the young boi bindi deer.

Then all of them became pairs of their own accord. Having observed this Haṛam and Buḍhi said: "They have found each other, we shall marry them". Then they (two) built a house; in this they made seven rooms; when this was ready, they brewed beer; having done this all of them drank; when they had drunk, Haṛam and Buḍhi put them, one pair in each of the seven rooms, the eldest young man with the eldest girl, the youngest boy with the youngest girl, in this way all of them. In this way their marriages were performed.

After this all of them got children. They were growing up. Then Haṛam and Buḍhi said: "When there were no others, we two joined and became a pair and brought forth and multiplied them, seven boys and seven girls, and these children we have also married, brothers and sisters; but these we two shall make into septs; let no brothers and sisters be married". Then they divided them into septs. The eldest boy became Hāsdaḳ, the one following him Murmu, the next Kisku, the one after him Hęmbręm, the one following him Māṛḍi, the one after him Soṛęn, and the one following him Ṭuḍu. Then they said to them: "Join them together in marriage in this way: don't marry them with one of their

[16] The forest names probably refer to the names of the trees there. Khaṇḍerae is the name of a bush known in Mayūrbhañj, but not any more in Santāl; sāṛākué is Salix tetrasperma, Roxb., common in the Santāl country. [15] Ficus tomentosa, L. [18] Ḍahar, a cart-track, a road, also the name of a certain Santāl dance. [17] A mythical unknown deer.

[137] [92]

21 Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

539

Get up, get up, do get up, my companion,
Be watchful, be watchful, do be watchful, my companion.
The Badoli people are hitting and killing each other.

For what purpose are they cutting each other, my companion,
For what purpose are they killing each other, my companion,
For what purpose are they hitting and killing each other, my companion?

For the sake of a boundary they are cutting each other, my companion,
For the sake of a landmark they are killing each other, my companion,
For the sake of a landmark they are hitting and killing each other.

Up to Campa we and the Muṇḍas, the Birhǫr, the Kurmbis and others were called by the name of Kharwar[29]. The Birhǫr were outcasted because they for some cause or other ate Hanúman monkeys. Also the Muṇḍas separated themselves there, and the Kurmbis gradually became somewhat like Dekos. Some Kharwars joined in marriage with the Dekos called Siñ[30]; therefore their descendants became Siñs. Up to the present time these Siñs are landlords in the old country. Also among the Birhǫr some became Siñs. Among these also until to-day some are landlords in the old country. In olden times, people tell, one Siñ had illicit intercourse with a daughter of a Kisku king, and the girl bore the child out of wedlock and threw it away in the forest. Some wealthy Maṛṇḍis picked this child up and brought it home with them. The child grew up with them, and they named him Mandǫ Siñ. When this boy grew into maturity he became a great and valiant man; as regards intellect or fighting strength, nobody was able to compete with him. He became divan[31] with a Kisku "king". One day he said to the king: "Please, find a bride for me". Having called the council together the king asked them; but nobody would give him, this bastard, a girl to be his wife.

Because of this Mandǫ Siñ became very angry; he said: "If you will not give me a daughter to be my wife, I shall forcibly apply sindur to every girl of yours and defile them". Having heard this the people of the country became awfully afraid and said: "Come along, let us run away". At that time most of them fled; only a few people remained, because they coveted property.

Some people say, it is told, that this Mandǫ Siñ or some other Siñ was a friend of the Muslims. They fought so fiercely, it is told, with our ancestors, that the sun was shadowed by the shooting of arrows, and when at sun-rise it became light again, the Muslims were angry and said: "Which fellow is it who is coming, a fellow more mighty than we, come,

[192 829]

[29] Kherwar is nowadays the more common pronunciation. Some present-day Santals who have wanted to effect a kind of reformation have styled themselves Kherwars. [30] Possibly Rājputs. Siñ means a lion; Paharias and many Bhūyas in the Santal Parganas like to style themselves Siñ. [31] Minister, General manager.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

II. CHAṬIAR, CEREMONIAL CLEANSING

a. Janam chaṭiar, ceremonial cleansing after birth[1].

611 844 783

Children are named after (i. e. born into) the sept of their father, not after that of their mother. When a child is born in a village, this village becomes ceremonially unclean; therefore they do not perform any bonga-worship until the uncleanness has been blotted out. And where a child is born, this house becomes unclean; therefore until the uncleanness is wiped out, no inhabitant of the village will eat or drink in this house.

When a boy is born, they shave on the fifth day, and if it is a girl on the third day. On the day of shaving the father of the child calls on all, (also) poor people, to be shaved. They come together at his house; when all are come they set a barber to do the shaving. First of all he shaves the village priest, thereupon the field priest, thereupon the village headman, the deputy headman, the headman of morals and his deputy and the messenger of the village headman, and thereupon all the men of the village and last of all the father of the child.

852

Now the barber calls for the new-born child. The woman who has worked as midwife carries the child in her arms out to the door, bringing along two leaf-cups, one leaf-cup with water and one to put the hair in. The barber shaves the child[2]; when this is done, the midwife puts this hair in the leaf-cup; thereupon she binds two threads on the arrow with which she cut the umbilical cord when the child was born. Now the child's father fills oil in the leaf-cup and calls on the men of the village to come along with him to a place where they can go down to the water. They go along. When they come back after having bathed, the midwife takes along with her oil and turmeric and the arrow on which the two threads are bound, and calling on the women of the village to come along she takes them to the watering-place to bathe. They go there. At the place of bathing the midwife throws one thread together with the child's hair into the water and lets it float away, after she has made five marks of sindur at the descent to the water. This they call to buy way down to water. The other thread and the arrow she washes and brings with her back to the house, when all of them have bathed. Arrived to the house the midwife immerses the remaining thread in turmeric(water), and this she makes into

[1] The word is possibly to be connected with H. chaṭhī, the sixth (day after birth, when the house is cleaned, the child named, and so on). [2] The whole head.

[192]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

b. When a child is born out of wedlock.

In case a girl without being married gives birth to a child, her father and brothers inform the village headman and his deputy. These two call the village people together, and when they have gathered they ask the girl who is the father of the child. The village people then seize the man the girl names, and even if he denies responsibility, his word will not be accepted. 848

But if he is able to prove that other youngsters are also implicated, then the child is born in the bidhuạ-state[5]. If only one person is proved to be responsible, he will have to take the girl and keep her as his wife; but if two or three persons are proved to be implicated, they will have to pay some money; then they shave off the hair of the child's head in the name of the Jọg Mạńjhi (custos morum of the village), and the child gets his sept. Or if the Jọg Mạńjhi is a relative, they will shave off the head-hair in the name of the Jọg Paranik (the deputy custos morum) or of any man in the village. Of the money that the young men have paid, the child's mother will get some, to nurse the child until it gets strong; the man in whose name they shave off the head-hair gets some, and the village people get the rest of the money. If the child's mother is unable to name anyone as father, then also the child becomes a bidhuạ, if the male relatives of the girl are unable to buy a man to stand as a husband for her. But if they are able to buy her [583] a husband, the child will get this one's sept, and they shave off the head-hair of the child in his name. To buy a husband the male relatives of the girl will have to pay twenty rupees. This money the man who stands as husband gets. If they are unable to procure a husband, they will shave off the head-hair for the child as a bidhuạ in the name of the village Jọg Mạńjhi or his deputy, or of any man in the village, and the child will get this man's sept. At this time the male relatives of the child's mother will have to pay, and the man in whose name they shave off the child's head-hair will get the money. Formerly, before money was introduced, one pair of bullocks, one cow with calf (in milk) and one bundle of paddy had to be paid. This the man who stands as husband gets.

If a Santal man has had illicit intercourse with a girl of another race, or a Santal girl [563] with a man of another race, and a child is born, in this case we outcaste such ones for life, and such people will run away from among us.

c. Caco chạṭiạr, the ceremony when a Santal is given full social rights.

There is no fixed time for the caco chạṭiạr[6], only that it must be performed before marriage, and children cannot be married unless they have gone through this ceremony. When a man has a number of children, he will have this act performed with 881

[5] The Santal word, bidhuạ, is used about one who has no recognized father. [6] Caco is the Santal word for toddling, a child's first successful attempt to walk. As the name implies, the caco chạṭiạr may be performed with a child, as soon as it is able to move about. [192]

4 Oslo Etn. Mus. — Bedding.

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

881 [776] [273] [302] them all at the same time. If a child should die before having been through this ceremony, they do not cremate such ones and do not carry their bones to the Damuda river.

A man wants to have the caco chaṭiar for his children; he brews beer and procures oil and turmeric to anoint the village people. Then he calls the village headman and his deputy and pours beer out to these two. They ask him: Look here, you, what beer is this that you are giving us? He says: This, father, is intimation-beer; I am minded to do so and so, that is to say, I am going to have caco chaṭiar for my children. This happens in the morning. After having drunk the beer the village headman and his deputy send the Goḍet to call the village people[7]. They come; when they are assembled, the village girls first anoint the village priest and his wife sitting on a mat; thereupon they anoint the field priest and his wife, after them the village headman and his wife, thereupon his deputy and this one's wife, the custos morum and wife, his deputy and wife, the messenger and wife, and finally they anoint all the (men and) women of the village. Now they serve beer round. First they give the village headman and his deputy, thereupon all the people. When one round has been served they ask the father of the children: For how many is this? He answers: For so and so many. Then so many children as are to have the caco chaṭiar, so many rounds of beer they serve, each round four leaf-cups to each. Then they ask the father of the children: How many iṛi and how many erba of yours have shot into ears[8]? He says: So many iṛi and so many erba have shot into ears. They say in reply: Very fortunate. Then they ask him: Whereabouts are the countries? The children's father then names the countries where the grandparents of the children live. Then they call for the namesake-beer. Now the grandparents of the children give the village people beer that they have brought with them from their homes. Thereupon the village people dance singing:

[793] [603] [539]

Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai tracks,
Along here, along in this direction are Nilgai hind tracks.

Track, track the Nilgai tracks,
Follow, follow the Nilgai hind tracks.

On the tank embankment are Nilgai tracks,
On the river bank are tracks of the Nilgai hind.

Tie on him (her), O mother, a golden bell,
Fasten on him (her) O mother, hollow sounding bells.

[192]

[7] Nowadays the Jog Mājhi is generally asked to call the people together; the people sit in rows on straw spread out for the purpose. [8] I. e., how many girls and how many sons have been born to you? iṛi in Paskwa Cwa-galli, L., fig used about a girl; erba in Saharia Italics, Kurth., fig used about a boy.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

584 [605] there are no cousins (sons of father's brothers), a son of some other man will do, provided he stands in the relationship of cousin.

Now they bring a loṭa which they hand to the wife of the bridegroom's elder brother and say to her: Please, take the bridegroom round. The anointing girls take the mat in their arms, and the wife of the bridegroom's elder brother guides them, and having taken the loṭa with water she pours out a little round about. They go round three times; thereupon the anointing girls spread out the mat, and the bridegroom, his follower and the conductor of ceremonies sit down on this.

The Jog Mañjhi then says: Please say to the bridegroom's mother that she may come. She comes; now they have oil and turmeric in a leaf-cup, and they say to the Jog Mañjhi: Tell the bridegroom's mother that she should smear some oil and turmeric on the cheek of her son. When she has done this, the Jog Mañjhi says to the anointing girls: Now his mother has prepared the way, please, anoint the bridegroom. They do this; and the marriage-broker says to them: Make yourselves ready, it is becoming night; come along. They are now on the point of starting.

They then ask the marriage-broker: Will you take us along the highroad or along a path? He says: I shall take us along the highroad. They take with them two rupees and a brass-necklet, further a kettle-drum and a Ram's horn[16]; drumming and blowing the horn they go on. When they reach the village, they stop at the end of the village street. The marriage-broker goes in advance to the bride's home and says to them: See, we have come, please meet us with water, and show us where you are putting us up. Now some people in the village may have an empty house[17], and they say to the Jog Mañjhi: Do go and find out and bring us word. He finds such a place; and carrying a loṭa with water on a leaf-plate on the palm of his hand turned upwards he goes to the bridegroom's party and says to them: Come along, you of the bridegroom's party[18], I shall take us to the lodgings. Then they go there. The bridegroom's party say to the Jog Mañjhi and the Goḍet: Please, get us firewood and leaves, two earthenware cooking pots for the rice, one earthenware small vessel, some wooden spoons and ladles, and show us where we can get water; where shall we find it when it is night? And also get us a flat basket, please, to pour the cooked rice out in. They bring them all this.

Thereupon the bridegroom's party pour out the fatigue removing beer; they give the Jog Mañjhi and his companion and also drink themselves. The Jog Mañjhi and his companion then say to them: Do prepare your food, and when we get ready we shall call you.

---

[16] See Santal Dictionary s. v. Hindi Nāsinga. [17] I. e., where there is nothing that the presence of strangers might contaminate. [18] It might be noted that the word, here and elsewhere, translated "bridegroom's party" stands for those who represent the family and especially the village community of the bridegroom. The word (barjatko) is of Aryan origin, which may be of some significance.

[609] [192] [602]

we shall see the waving ceremony. They make themselves ready and take with them one pot of squeezed-out-beer and one small pot of poured-out beer. This they call "Founding-still"[51]. Two men carry this along to the bride's home. When the bridegroom's party arrive there, they spread out straw for them to sit on in the temporary shed. The headman of the bride's side says to the bridegroom's party: Please sit down here; we shall see the performance of the waving ceremony[52]. They sit down. 585

Now the Jog Maṅjhi on the bride's side says: Please find the anointing girls and grind some turmeric; we shall anoint the bride and the bridegroom. The anointing girls anoint the bride and the bridegroom and those with them. Thereupon they give them food. At this time the bridegroom will not eat, and when they ask him, he will not speak. The bride's father then says to him: Do, my son-in-law, eat both of you, I shall give you both milk[53] to eat. And as he promises to give him a calf, he eats. When they have eaten, they get up. The anointing girls roll up the mat, and in the hem-end of their cloths they take the broken bits of turmeric. Now the conductress of ceremonies takes the loṭa with water and goes out into the courtyard; when she has gone out, they see that no figures are drawn at the Mahua post. The Jog Maṅjhi then says to her: Please smear cow-dung there and draw figures with flour. She answers him: Give me something, then only I shall draw. The Jog Maṅjhi says to the bridegroom's party: Please, honoured bridegroom's party, no drawing is being made here, as you see. They answer him: How is it that no drawing is being made; do exert yourself to make her draw. He answers them: I am exerting myself; it is not proper. They then say: Make her willing, we shall give (what is needed).

Thereupon the conductress of ceremonies plasters with cow-dung and draws figures, so that it may look nice. The Jog Maṅjhi says to her: Now please, take the loṭa with water and lead the bride and the bridegroom three times round where drawings have been made. She does this; then the Jog Maṅjhi says to the girls who are keeping the mats: Do spread the mat out on this drawing. They do this, and the Jog Maṅjhi says to the bride and the bridegroom, the best-man, the two followers and the conductress: Please sit down on the mat. They sit down, and the Jog Maṅjhi goes into the house and says to the bride's mother: Take out the lucky-pot[54]. The bride's mother and her followers, i. e., the wives of three brothers, take out the lucky-pot; and they also take with them one seer of paddy in a fold of their cloth; in front of the bride and the bridegroom they take the paddy out from the cloth-fold and put it down there, and thereupon they put the pot down on the top of the paddy. They put an earthenware lid on the mouth of the narrow-necked pot. After this they [532]

[51] The translation is only an attempt. The word rendered as "still" (bhaṭi, a Hindi word) is the name of the oven or kiln used by Suṇḍis when brewing beer or distilling liquor, and is by Santals mostly used fig. about liquor. [192]
[52] Different from the previously mentioned ceremony, in so much as the waving is ended by giving a present; cf. Dictionary s. v. cumaṇya. [53] Fig. about the gift of a calf (heifer). [54] Kolean here uses the word that is the common one in Manbhum (karwāṭ ṭhili) and zero in the Santal Parganas, where saguṇ ṭhili, omen pot, is mostly heard. [273]

2; Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

he puts them down at the magic square; he applies sindur to every single stick of theirs. 796
Thereupon they drive the cattle near to the magic square.

Any cow[14], who treads on or smells at the egg put down there, this cow they catch and, washing her legs, they anoint her horns with oil, and apply sindur to her horns. The herd of this cow they lift up and place him on some one's shoulder, and bring him to the village headman and put him down there. The boy bows to the headman and after him to all the elderly men there.

Now they go home, drumming the dancing-drum as they go along. They enter the house of the village priest, who gives them beer. After they have drunk this, they proceed to the house of the village headman, who also gives them beer. At this time the village headman says to the Jog Mañjhi and the Jog Paranik: So long as the festival lasts, the young men and girls are in your charge, and the festival is also in your charge. If you let the village street become deserted, we shall fine both of you. Thereupon they separate. They take food and drink beer in their respective houses.

It is evening. The elderly men and women go to bed, and the young men bless[15] the cattle. Standing at the door of the cow-shed they drum the dancing drum and sing[16]: [539]

The cows have gone to the Siribandha forest,
The buffalo-cows are grazing on the other side of the Ganges.

The cows come home when the sun sets,
The buffalo-cows come home, after having grazed, at midnight.

On what horn is it to get oil and sindur?
Where on its back is grass and paddy to be strewed on it?

In this way they sing, drum, and blow the flute at every house exceedingly, and all along the village street they shout indecently. Although they hear this in every house, they do not listen to it.

After these the girls perform the waving ceremony over the cattle. They also commence at the house of the village headman. They bring with them sun-dried rice, and sun-dried paddy, mixed together, dhubi grass and a lighted lamp. They make an invocation: Take it, you reddish one, through you, reddish one, may there become one hundred reddish [782]
ones, by your guiding them, following them, fill this cattle shed, this place of omen, fill [539]
it to overflow; may you earn, may you produce, to the backside of the house, to its eaves;

---

[14] The word used may also mean any piece of cattle, not necessarily a cow. [15] The word translated "bless" [192]
is ordinarily used about "awaken"; the object of the proceedings is to cause the cattle to become fruitful and effective. [16] In a kind of Bihari.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

796 When the young men and girls have finished dancing, they again go to the house of the Jog Mañjhi, to pass the night there. When it becomes dawn next day, the girls plaster the courtyard in the house of the Jog Mañjhi with cow-dung, they draw and bring water, and the young men collect and bring together the straw bundles put on the heads of the bullocks. This they thresh, and this and the paddy that they gathered at the final dancing and begging the Jog Mañjhi measures out to the girls, dividing it between them, to make rice. Thereupon the Jog Mañjhi gives the young men and girls their noon meal. When they have eaten, he gives them in charge in their respective homes. Now the Sohrae is at an end.

When the girls have made the paddy that the Jog Mañjhi measured out to them in rice, they bring it to him. Of this he brews beer. After some ten days he gathers all the people of the village in his house. He gives them this beer, and he gives food to the young men and girls. This beer they call the ohetiar (social cleansing) beer of the young men and girls. By this beer the young men and girls are "eaten" back into society again; their exemption is ended, and the closed ears of the village people are also opened.

The Sakrat[27] is the last day of the month of Pus. On the day two days before this day they have a village council and talk together, saying: To-morrow we shall catch fish and crabs, the day after we shall have the Sakrat. Consequently next day they catch fish and crabs. On the day of the Sakrat they at cockcrow kill a fowl in every house. When they have prepared rice and curry and have returned from bathing, they eat the rice and flesh curry, curry of fish, and crabs or any other stuff. When the sun is up, the men go to hunt. They hunt in a near forest. They bring Sal-leaves home with them; they go to bathe and return. In the meantime the women have prepared flattened rice and cakes. This the men offer to the bongas in every house, they offer it to the ancestors, and they pour out beer as a libation to these and to Marañ buru. Thereupon they make invocations in the name of the Sakrat, like the invocations at other times. They eat the cakes and the flattened rice. When they have eaten, the Jog Mañjhi invites them to come along and shoot at a target. He cuts down a plantain tree or a ricinus tree and takes this along. In the open place at the end of the village street he fixes it in the ground. Now the village priest first shoots at the target post. After him all the village men shoot, until it is hit. Then when some one has hit it, the Jog Mañjhi goes and cuts the target post down with a battle-axe, and the Jog Mañjhi carries the one who hit it on his shoulder from there to the assembled people. And they both salute all the people, commencing from the village headman.

[526]

[535] Now the young men dance the sword-dance and make many kinds of show. When they have finished acting in this way, they return to the village. The target post that the Jog Mañjhi cut down two men carry along on their shoulders like an animal. All enter the

[27] Hindi saṅkrānt, the passage of the sun into a new sign.

•[192]

796 long as the hot season lasts; only our old sites[2] we shall continue to occupy; those we do not give into your charge, and our huts we shall also keep. The headman answers: Then since you have given it up, what will become of me? I am here. So those who go we shall take away and leave them; they who come, we shall bring here[2]. Thereupon they return to the village, each with one bundle thatching grass and five or six laths.

Arrived in the village they pretend to thatch the house of the village priest, and they drink beer at his place. In a similar way they pretend to thatch the houses of the village headman, the Paranik, the Jog Mañjhi, the Jog Paranik, the Godet, and the priest of the outskirts, and drink beer at each place. Thereupon they drink beer in their respective houses together with a couple of friends, and the young people dance lagre until they get enough of it.

Five, six, or ten days later the village headman calls the village people together in his house. He has brewed beer; first he gives them two leaf-cups each. Then they ask him: Look here, Sir, what beer is this? He answers: This is the broken rice that they collected; it is beer brewed on this. They reply: Yes, Sir, it is broken rice, quite so; but listen, do they not say: When you prepare rice and curry, it is the salt that makes it tasty; when you give beer or liquor, it is the words that make it tasty; we are not getting the meaning of it. Then the village headman answers them: This is nothing, honourable village people; as you remember, I gave up my position in the month of Magh; now then, I am staying on again, if you village people are pleased with me. They reply to him: Yes, Sir, so many days we also have been waiting for you; therefore we have not tried to speak to anybody; we said: Perhaps his mind will be turned, our Father headman's; an old king, an old banga, that is good; we have known you as our headman; where shall we find the shade of such a luxuriously foliaged tree? Thereupon he gives them plenty of beer.

In the same way a day later the Paranik calls the village people together, and, giving them beer, he asks them to get his work again. After this the Jog Mañjhi, the Jog Paranik, the Godet, the village priest, and the priest of the outskirts each separately give them beer, and each pretends to get his work back; and after them every single tenant gives the village headman and his deputy and the village people beer and pretends to ask to get his lands back. This is a pretext for drinking beer to make the unoccupied time pass.

Haha (the Flower festival) is our other great festival. This comes in the month of Phalgun (middle of February to middle of March) at the third quarter of the moon. This is a festival in connexion with the turning of the year. The Sal trees blossom at this time, the leṛe and the muruṛ also blossom, and the Mahua gets flowers. Before we have the Flower festival, we do not suck the leṛe flowers or the muruṛ flowers, and we do not deck ourselves with Sal flowers, and we do not eat the Mahua either. If any one sucks

[192]

[2] The 'old sites' are understood to be the wives. [2] The two sentences refer to death and birth.

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

765 his own family. All give him water. After this they give him beer, a couple of brass-
cups, until he is satisfied. Marañ buru and Porodhoi they also give each one leaf-cup
787 with water and beer. Thereupon they ask the dead one: Please, as thou knowest, we are going to take thee to the Damuda river, may nowhere on the road, in the forest stomach-ache, headache be created, be formed. He then says: Do it, youngsters, nothing will happen, like the wind you will go, like the wind you will come back. When they have had this talk, they make them come to.

765 Thereupon they wrap up one seer of flattened rice, three cakes, and one seer rice. They stitch together a purse of the cloth of the dead one; taking this with them they go to the end of the village street. Women bring water along in brass-cups, besides turmeric. When they have reached the end of the village street, they stand together at the cross road. Now three men go to fetch the flower-bones[3]. They take fire with them. When they have dug it up, they set fire to the burial place and come away. Then they say: The old woman's hut is burning, hey! Now they come straight along, they do not look back. This they call the burning of the old woman's hut. They cut and bring along three ebony sticks, short ones. These three they tie into a bundle, and on top of this they put the small earthenware vessel. They take out the flower-bones and call on the women to come near. With a leaf-cup these (women) pour water on the flower-bones, after this turmeric water, after this milk. The heir of the dead one puts the flower-bones into the purse. Thereupon the people move away some distance. One man among the three who brought the flower-bones takes an ebony stick and goes three times round the small earthenware vessel; then he at once strikes the vessel into pieces with his left hand; thereupon the three men go with the flower-bones half-way, that is, up to past one village boundary. The other people go back to the house of death after having bathed. They drink a couple leaf-cups of beer.

It becomes evening. They catch and bring a few fish. When they have brought these, they cook them and a fowl into curry and rice without salt. When they cut up the fowl, they cut off and keep one leg and one wing. This leg and wing they tie to a small piece of wood, and when it has become dark, three men go to the cross-road at the end of the village street; they take with them two or three other small pieces of wood, a little thatching-grass from the eaves, and fire, and one man among them drags the leg and wing that is tied to the piece of wood along the ground. When they have reached the cross-road, they build a semblance of a house, thatch it with the thatching-grass, and when they have thrown the fowl's leg and the wing into this house, they set fire to the hut and come away. They say: The old woman's hut is burning, hey! Thereupon they come straight back to

[192] [3] Lit. jaṅ baha, bone flower, the three bits of bone that are to be taken to the Damuda river. No Santal has been able to explain why these bones are called "flower", some think, that it may possibly be due to the bones being white.

31 Mukherjea O. Y 4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

And he made the birds called "ha*n*s hà*n*sil,[1]" out of his own flesh near the chest. He kept them on his hands. The birds looked very beautiful. Soon he breathed on them when they became living birds and flew away. The birds fluttered here and there, but finding no place to alight, perched on the hands of Ṭhàkur Jiu. Then "siñ sadòm" came down again, holding the thin thread which, according to the Santals, always hangs through space called "tòrè sutàm[2]" to drink water. While drinking water, he let go the foam on his mouth. It floated about on the water and what we know as sea-foams, originated from it.

Then Ṭhàkur Jiu called on the birds: "Perch on the foam and travel about the sea as on a boat."

"We are moving about, but getting no food," replied the "ha*n*s ha*n*sil" birds.

Then Ṭhàkur Jiu sent for the crocodile and when he came, said, "Can you get the soil from the bottom?"

The crocodile agreed. But as he was bringing in a piece of earth, it dissolved. So he failed.

1. Ha*n*s ha*n*sin (Campbell's dictionary) = Two mythical birds, a male and a female, who according to Santal tradition, were the progenitors of the human race, the first man and woman being produced from their eggs.

2. *Tòrè sutàm* = gossamer (Campbell).

B Mukherjea O. Y-1,5 (ca. 1933-1950) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

back and informed Thàkur about the land. Afterwards, they carried their two children on their backs to the new place and kept there. Soon they left them for good to take care of themselves. 539

What became of the parent-birds, none can tell anything. The Santal traditions are silent about them.

The names of these first-parents were Haṛam and Ayo. 'Haṛam' means 'old man' and it is interesting to note that the Santali expression "hõṛ" meaning "man" has been derived from the name of their first-father. "Ayo" in Santali means "mother". We need not say, perhaps, that these two names can be usefully compared with Adam and Eve. [192]

There is, however, another account which calls the Santal first-parents as Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Budhi.[1]

We are told that so long as they lived in Hihiri Pipiri they ate seeds of "sumtu bukuch" (*Eleusine aegyptica, Pers*) and "sama" (*Panicum Colonum*, L.) as their food. They had no clothing on and they did not know what shame was. And they lived in perfect peace and happiness.

1. The Mayurbhanj Santals named the first parents as Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Budhi.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Samal AW42

539 [192] Then came temptation in the shape of an old man (*Liṭà*)[1] who introduced himself as Gòròm Baba (*grand-father*). With soft speech, the old man (*Liṭà*) lured the first-parents to prepare a drink and then to drink the liquor. They got drunk. And soon they behaved as man and wife.

Next morning while they were still tipsy, Gòròm Baba reappeared and enquired, "Hallo, how are you doing? Why don't you come out?"

And they awoke and discovered themselves nudes, for the first time in their lives. Then they felt ashamed and said, "How can we come out? We have no clothes on."

Gòròm Baba went away smiling. The Haṛam and Ayo wove shirts of fig (*Ficus indica*) and clothed themselves. Henceforward, they increased and multiplied.

[614] In course of time, they grew in large numbers, till there were seven clans of the tribe, viz. Hansdak', Murmu, Kisku, Hèmbròm, Màrndi, Sòrèn and Tudu. It is noteworthy that inter-marriage within the same clan was prohibited from the very beginning of things.

Now from Hihiri Pipiri, the early Santals migrated to Khòj kaman. Khòj kaman means the place

1. Liṭà is, according to the traditions, the real name of Maraṅ Buru, and is preserved in the word *liṭà ak'*, meaning the rainbow (Rel. *Dt. Gazetteer*, S. P. 1910, p. 118).

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
AW42 Santal AW42

173 At this time, say the old Patriarchs, Ram Chandra, the mythical king of the Hindus, as we read in the Ramayana, was reigning. We hear that
173 648 some Kharwars[1] accompanied Ram Chandra's expedition to Lanka, to help him in his fight against the demon king, Ravana; and so, the Santals had peace with the Dekos (*non Santals*) for a long time.
[192] The Santals inhabited the jungles, while the Dekos (*non-Santals*) used to live in the plains. But in later times there was frequent friction between them.

Even now, the Dekos are considered as thorns by the Santals. They say that when the Santals reclaim a forest, Dekos come to snatch it away. They regret that the English helped the Dekos during the Mutiny (*the Santal Insurrection*); otherwise the boundary of Santal lands would have been the Ganges.

173 539 The Santals assert that in days long gone by, their positions extended on both sides of the Ganges. There is a song about it: —

Gaṅ nàni dò pèrèc'ena,
Soṛa nàni dò coṛañena:
Do ja miru, ruàṛme.

1. The forefathers of the Santals, as we shall learn later, called themselves "Kharwars." (Cf Kherwal, Mayurbhanj).

3t Mukherjee O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

144 in size, position and colour, resemble certain peculiar
143 blue spots found on Mongol children, which are said to be a distinct race-mark not found outside the Mongol people."[1]

Their Language

197 The Santals speak a language of their own. Linguists say that Santali belongs to the Muṇḍā family of languages, which in its turn belongs to the Austro-Asiatic sub-family, termed so by Peter Schmidt. According to Dr. Campbell, this language has reached a much higher stage of development than any other dialect of the linguistic stock to which it belongs and is spoken with little variation in idiom or pronunciation over the greater part of the Santali-speaking areas. Northern Santali or that spoken in Bhagalpur, Monghyr, the Santal Parganas, Birbhum, Bankura, Hazaribagh and Manbhum, is the language of an overwhelming majority of the tribe, and is more polished than Southern Santali, or that spoken in the remaining districts, as a dialect, or a group of dialects of it."[2]

[192] Like all other languages, Santali has drawn upon other languages, but the influence of Bengali seems

[113] 1 *Mongolian race-marks among Santals.* J.A.S.B., 1904, Part II, p. 26.

[113] 2 Ref. Introduction to Dr. Campbell's Santali Dictionary (Edn. 1933).

Bi Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

to be the most prominent. Any one glancing through a Santali dictionary will be struck with the vocabulary bodily assimilated by the Santals from the current dialects of Bengal, and any one listening even to their folk-songs will notice that a large number of them are really in Bengali. We marked it even in the heart of Santalia, the Santal Parganas, when we heard a Santal woman humming, "Panch takar ghati bati chore laia gela" (*My pots and bowls worth rupees five have been stolen by thieves.*)[1]

Santali itself is a peculiarly expressive language so far as natural objects and things concerning the common life of agriculturists. But when it comes to the expression of things spiritual or the common ideas of modern civilization, it has got to fall back on the speech of the neighbours.

It is not, however, a written language and their traditional legends are orally handed down. The question of a Santal script engaged the attention of the early European Missionaries and they used the Roman script. It is due to their efforts that a large number of books have been written in the Roman script and the education imparted to Santals in the

1 The missionary in charge of the Dharampur district (S. P.) tells a story that while he was there with his wife, a Santal tried to explain that it was useless for them to teach Santali, as they knew the language well enough and pressed for Bengali or Hindi. (*Annual Report of the Santal Mission of Northern Churches* 1934).

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

and she happens to be late by half-an-hour, she will 562
smile and show you the sun, saying "I won't work. 461
I am late." "But you may be late and still you may work," you may protest. "A day is being lost for you." "*Baṅ*," she will quietly answer. "*Baṅ*" means 'No' and Santal traditions are silent [192]
if Ṭhàkur Jiu taught them during the days of Pilcu [773]
Haṛam and Pilcu Buḍhi, "Don't yield after saying [577]
Baṅ."

Tribal Division

We have already seen that the clans mentioned 614
number twelve according to Santal traditions, referred to at length in the first chapter. Now let us place side by side the names of these clans as investigated by ethnologists of repute and workers amongst the Santals, maintaining, so far as possible, the spellings as adopted by them, together with our list obtained from Mayurbhanj.

The task of finding out the meanings of the clan names is a difficult but interesting task facing an ethnologist. In the previous pages we have already given the reader an idea of the genesis of the clan-names according to tradition. Old Santals, when questioned at Mayurbhanj, gave conflicting versions of the popular tradition. But the meaning of at least a few of them are very clear. Thus [192]
"Hansdak'," certainly refers to the goose. "Hans"

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 101]

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

614
192

in Santali means a goose, and "dak'" means water. "Hèmbròm" means betel-nut, "Murmu" means Murum jel, the Nil gae, or blue cow, (Portax pictu), "Màrṇḍi," a weed of rice cultivation (*Ischaemum rugosum*, Salisb.) and "Sòrèn," the constellation of Pleiades (sòrènko). We shall have occasion to discuss these meanings further in course of the forthcoming pages. It ought to be mentioned, however, that Risley in his *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Vol. II, page 125) gives the following meanings of the Santal clan-names:| Bedea (*Sheep?*), Besra (*Hawk*), Hemrom, Hembram (*Betel-palm*), Marndi (*Grass*), Murmu (*Nil gai*) and Soren (*Constellation of Pleiades*). About the rest he is silent. Rev. P. O. Bodding in his *Santali to English Dictionary* does not give the meanings of the clan-names particularly, but his note on the origin of the Besras is worth quoting. "The story that they are despised because they formerly were licentious is probably due to the word "bèsròm" (*obstinate, licentious*) but this word is much younger than the name of the sept."

[114]

Several points in the comparative list given above require to be elucidated. Col. Dalton, while maintaining that the tribes number twelve, omits the twelfth viz. *Bedea*, which is thought to be an extinct branch according to almost all the authorities. Similarly, Dr. Campbell gives eleven names, adding that one has been lost.

614
[114]

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

mation of the Santals, as distinct from other sub-clans as "Kuda-Hansdak," "Bale Hansdak" who are considered pure. It is said that the *Gòndwars*, in their attempt to conceal their real identity declare themselves as belonging to the *Sòrèn* clan, whereas, in their manner of worship they differ from the Sòrèns radically, thereby giving a clue to their identity.

The derivation of the very word *Gòndwar* points to their connexion with the Gònds. The ending "war" probably means "relating to." In saying so, we rely on the fact that one of the sub-clans of the *Murmus* call themselves *Khedwar-Murmu*. According to them they derived the name from the circumstance that their progenitors chased and hunted a "Murum" (*Nil gae ; Portax Pictu*). *Khedwar* here means those related to a chase (*khed* = chase, *war* = relating to).[1]

Clan Exogamy and Totemism

At this stage we should note that all these clans are exogamous ; and presumably to preserve the blood from being contaminated by unconscious incest, they have certain pass-words to distinguish

1. Regarding Bedeas, Kharwars and Gòndwars, we must acknowledge the help received from Moulavi M. Laeequddin, Census Officer, Mayurbhanj.

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

614 • 192 them. These symbols are supposed to be connected with the names of their original home in Campa. That the guess is well-founded will be apparent from the story of their migration where we saw that the *Màṛṇḍis* lived at Badoligarh, the *Hèmbròms* lived at Khairigarh, *Kiskus* at Koendagarh and *Tudus* at Simgarh and these they still carry on as vivid memories of their past.[1]

614 Secondly, these clans are totemistic. The Santal thinks that certain relationship exists between him and some physical phenomena or some tangible object as an animal, a bird or even some plant or grass. Thus *Murmus* revere the *nilgai*, "Hansdak's" hold sacred the duck, *Màṛṇḍis* salute if they happen to cut "Màṛṇḍi" grass. The general rule is that a member of the same totem will never kill or hurt the object he derives his name from, nor will he tolerate intermarriage within the clan. But as we

---

1. These pass-words are enumerated by Risley as follows;—1. Hasdak' = Tatijhari, Gangijauni, Kara guja, Sohodoro. 2. Murmu = Champagarh, Baghumbha, Naran Majhi. 3. Kisku = Kundagarh. 4. Hembrom = Kunda, Khairigarh, Jalaghatia. 5. Marndi = Badoligarh, Jelen sinjo, Dhano Manjhi. 6. Saren = Anbali, Barha, Pero Pargana. 7. Tudu = Simgarh., Sukrihutup Baru Manjhi. 8. Baske = Ranga, Chunukjhandu. 9. Besra = Dhokrapalania, Gulu, Phagu Manjhi.

People of India, App. VIII. P. cix.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

614 *species of snake*) is their prohibited food, because this is the third meaning of the Santal *Murum*.

614
773 The mythical origin of sub-clans of this clan was thus narrated to us by Mr. Ananta Mañjhi, Sub-Inspector of Police, Mayurbhanj. Prefacing his story with the assertion that the name *Murmu* originated from a Nil gae, he said, "There were some men in a jungle one of whom was sleeping under a tree. A "Nil gae" chanced to run over him and he died. The rest chased the animal and killed it. (1) The men who chased and killed it were called "Khedwar Murmu" (2) Those who cut the bones of the animal came to be known as Samak' Murmu. (*samak'* means to cut).[1] (3) The men who caught hold of the tail of the animal were known as "Nej Murmu" (Nej = *tail*).[2] (4) Some who were resting under a tree nearby had the nomenclature of "Obòr Murmu" (*Obòr* means to *lie down*). Those who decorated themselves with Campa flowers at that time were named "Campa Baha Murmu." (6) The persons whose foreheads were stained with the blood of the animal at the time of cutting and chopping the meat were called "Tikà Murmu."

[192]

1. Samak' = to chop, to hack, to chop off or up. Vide Dr. Campbell's Dictionary, page 574. (Santali to English).

2. Dr. Campbell's Dictionary does not contain this word. It is a common enough expression borrowed from the Hindus.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

585 mutually rub each other's person with oil and turmeric paste, while they offer some vermilion to *Marañ Buru* and the god of water (*Ma Gònga*) with the tips of their fingers. Should the bride be the first to apply the mark, she is deemed to be the future ruling party. Now, the bridegroom is given a brass-pot which he hides in the mud ; the bride tries to find it out, and this intriguing process is repeated thrice. Now, after bath, all return home, when the bride washes the feet of her husband, his elder brother and other superiors.

Idi Agurnaal[1] (*Bride's return to her father's home*)

[769] After two days of the marriage, the couple return to the bride's home, when, the goat, left behind by the bridegroom's party at the time of marriage, is offered to the immediate dead ancestors of the bride. The elders of the village assemble, and the he-goat's meat is now cooked and every body joins the feast. The bridegroom is now presented with cows by his father-in-law, and should this present be delayed, he would hesitate to eat

[192] 1. "Agurnaal'." The word was so spelt by the educated Santals at Mayurbhanj. A similar word "àguàdar" in Dr. Campbell's *Santali to English Dictionary* means "A forerunner, those who precede a marriage-party to the bride's village", p. 6.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

of Kanva while bidding farewell to his foster daughter, Sakuntala.

Hòpòn hòpòn gidrà kuṛi
Sitoñ lòlò din repe, idiekantiñ,
Eho chandoboñga!
Jhipir jhipir dagme, purbarimil hoeme,
Rearayliñgmcho Cando boñga!

(Translation)

My daughter is very young,
You are taking her when the day is hot.
O God, let it rain in drops,
Let the eastern wind blow and make cool (the journey).

Songs of love

As is only natural, a good deal of Santal folk-songs deal with the eternal reaction on men and women regarding matters of the human heart. In the following song, a man thus speaks of his love for a lame girl:—

Burure siñarak' legec' legec' siñarak,'
Jibòn calak' rehoiñ sidgeya,
Natore kuṛi konrse kaṭa kuṛi'
Hiròm cetan rehoiñ agueya.

---

1. "Kònrse Kata" is explained in Dr. Campbell's Dictionary as "Side-ways." Many Santals in Mayurbhanj say it means a flower. In that view it will mean as beautiful as a 'Kònrse Kata' flower.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

837
539
533

Nephew: Sunum jor dare* buṭare utar setmae boholede
Dakhin setmae jangalede sardiyakat' mandre, manogo
Potam mamòkin rak'let.

The sense of the above may be given as follows:

Nephew: O uncle, O my uncle, my maternal aunt has become familiarised and taken advantage.

Uncle: You have got, O my nephew, to furnish evidence for this. You shall have to swear by placing your hand on your son's head.

Nephew: Under the shade of a wild fig tree, with head to the north and feet to the south, O my uncle.

They were cooing like wild-wood pigeons.

Human nature being what it is, it cannot be said that amongst the Santals there are no cases of extra-marital love. In the folk-song quoted below, a lad sings of his love for a married girl, who in her turn replies that she would renounce the marriage she had entered into:

Koṛa: Sisu relañ pirit lena, sisu relañ miluàlena
Namge miluà mayam charaoket'.

---

* "Sunum jor dare" was explained by Mayurbhanj Santals as being the *Kul* tree, known in Bengal. Dr. Campbell, however, gives the meaning as "A species of wild fig tree, *Ficus Cordifolia*, Roxb."

[192]
[114]

38 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

832 826 enquiry were a bit confusing. Whatever that may be, it appeared certain that they like a fairly large penis in men and a medium but tight vagina in women. In secondary sexual characters, the Santals were unanimous in stating that the men look at the breasts of women first of all, the eyes and hips being of next but important objects of attention.

Breasts of women are distinguished by custom by various names and symbols. A little detail may prove interesting to the reader. Imagine two Santal youths are passing by. A girl crosses them. One of the Santals may remark, "Ona bar paisa jucu jil." Literally it means "that share of meat worth two pice." It may be explained that in the country-side meat is sold in shares and the height of the meat, by a figure of speech, really refers to the breasts of the woman, who, if she chances to hear the expression will blush, for, she knows the meaning only too well. Breasts are classified in various types. The firm and hard breasts are called "Bèrèl siñjo nunu" (Breasts like the *Bel*-fruits, *Aegle Marmelos, Correa*), the type most admired and celebrated in folk-songs. Those standing up straight and strong are called *Ocot'*, which in Mayurbhanj Santali means "the hump of a bullock." Such types are also termed "Poraeni nunu" (Breasts like the White Lotus of the Nile, *Nymphoea Lotus* Linn.). A middle but a bit rounded size is poeti-

832 192 826

Jt Mukherjea O. T-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1952
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

832
192
826

cally enough termed "Kadam Baha." (*Kadam* Flower, belonging to a large deciduous tree, *Anthocephalus Cadamba, Bth. and Hook f.*). The variety falling down a little may be termed "Atur nunu" (Atur = to hang down ; nunu = breasts) or "Dandka Jhinga" (Jhinga = a cultivated food plant. *Lasia-acutangula*, Roxb.) or "Kaita Jhinga." Unusual ones, are termed "Hotot'" (A species of pumpkin, *Cucurbita lagenaria*) or "Laua" (Gourds). Small and undeveloped breasts are classed as "Putka" (A puff-ball, a genus of fungi, *Lycoperdon*). The wrinkled ones are called "Jòknòt' nunu."

832
539
533
826

The lure of breasts in a body beautiful, forms the subject of many folk-songs. One is quoted below:

Koṛa: Ul bele hòṛṇò tam ho,
Bel siñjo toà tam ho
Noà hòṛṇò noà toà do
òkòè lagat coń

Kuṛi: Nalo babu jam ròṛ ase,
Nalo babu jam rag ase.
Noa hòṛṇò, noà toà dò,
Noà dò am lagat ge.
Noa kacha, noa panci noa kodo
Tòkòc kocòkò oyo aṭet'hò.

Koṛa: Nalo maitem ròṛ ase,
Nalo mairem rag ase,

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

584 and about twenty percent result from love or capture.

593 The average Santal remains madly in love with his wife for about two years after the marriage, thereafter, his ardour cools. With children, the world of reality makes its existence felt.

584 [607] [603] Lead in courtship is also taken by the woman. In such cases she requisitions the services of her obliging sister-in-law or grandmother, who conveys the message of love. The woman does not send presents to win over the man of her choice. Further 833 enquiry regarding the point if lead in coitus is taken by women, revealed that sometimes it happens like that. But should such news leak out, it becomes [558] a subject for jokes and the husband is thought as a worthless fellow, but nothing particular is thought 554 about the girl. The girl who forces her company • 192 on men or belongs to many husbands is called a "dâri" by the Santals. The boy who likes the company of women rather too much is termed "Hirôm," and a flirt is called "Khilḍu". The licentious fellow, who cohabits with many women is censured as a "Caṇḍal."

152 834 We enquired to find out if the Santals are jealous by nature or not. It transpired that ordinarily the Santals do not suspect anything wrong if their women-folk talk or mix with other men on business or in course of social rounds. But human nature

Bi Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1932
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

833 In the following song, we come across a girl
533 almost mad in her youthful ardour for love, offering
539 herself into the arms of a young man:

Kuṛi: Dare umul ho achuren dò,
Sakam binda hòn rohoṛen dò
Dese miluà aṛakaiñme.

Koṛa: Alo mairem ròṛ ase,
Alo mairem rak' ase.
Kuṛi koṛa laṅ ñapam àkan
Nanwan sagaṛ[1] pàṭi[2] leka laṅ
Thokao jalada.

(Tránslated)

Girl: The shade of the tree has moved away,
The sheaves of leaves have dried up.
Please leave me, leave me, O my lover!

Boy: O girl, don't say like that.
O girl, don't weep like that.

---

[192] 1. Sagaṛ—"A solid cart-wheel, a cart having solid cart-wheels without iron tyres." Dr. Campbell.

[192] 2. Paṭi—"Each of the outside planks of the solid wheel of a Sagar." Dr. Campbell.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

Descent of the Santal is always reckoned in the male line and a man has the same totem as his father; the totem of the mother's father's line is not respected. As a female has no clan of her own, she is not a recognised member of her father's or of husband's clan and has not therefore to observe the taboos relating to their totems. But actually the Santal women do not kill any totem animal or any totem plant, just as their husbands do not kill or destory any totem animal, plant and other object.

Individual or sex totem is unknown to the Santals. Their totem is hereditary and not acquired. The members of a clan do not wear any distinguishing emblem or peculiar dress nor have they representations of their totem cut or tattooed on their persons or carved or painted on their houses or any personal belongings.

MARRIAGE

The Santali name for marriage is 'Bapla'. Mr. O'Malley is of the opinion that bapla is a word which very probably meant originally mutual strengthening i.e. of the two families.[1]

It is strictly forbidden for any Santal to marry within his own sept (Parish). He may marry into any other sept or sub-sept to which his mother belonged. Among the Santals there is a custom that a Santal can marry a girl who is three kursis (generations) apart. There are some septs which never intermarry with one another in consequence of some ancient feud between them. A Hansdak male or a female

[1]L.SS. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers. Santal Parganas, Calcutta 1910 Vol. XXII Page 134.

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

knowledge of herbs as well as the mysterious processes of evil caused by malevolent natural or human agencies and profess to cure the Santal of his daily ailments and afflictions. Thus magic ritualism is the speciality of Santal society and centre of the individual's life, whereas the religious ceremonials are more or less communal group affairs. The complicated cross section of the Santal belief would be well studied in the functional differentiation of the communal priest, the Ato naeke, his assistant, Kudam naeke, and Dehri (hunt-priest), the herbalist medicine-man, the Bonga-doctor or Ojha and the witch-detector on Jan-guru.

Different types of religious functionaires, medicine-man, etc.

Amongst the Santals working in the Daminiko area where they are closely concentrated, it was curious to notice many functionaries named as Ojha, Janguru, Kamruguru, Raranic, Ato-Naike, Kudam Naike and Dehri. The Santal carefully draws a distinction between the officers of his social ceremonials, the high priests of the community and the specialists who may be described in modern terms as the practising physicians and the mental disease experts, the last of course not being psychopathists but masters of spiritualist seances. The sorcerer who practises evil eye and witchcraft is also sharply distinguished.

Studying the other allied tribes nearby we find mostly a distinction between the social functionary in charge of religious festivals sharply distinguished from the spirit-doctor generally possessing second sight. The term for the priest is Naya amongst the Birhors and Pahan amongst the Mundas and Oraons. The word Naya as also Naike may have some connection with the

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

756
793
754
171
192

Hindi word Nayak or leader, a term often used in the old Hindu army for lieutenants. Rai Bahadur Roy shows the Birhor Naya in a plate as Raja or chief[1]. Similarly, the word Pahan may be equated with the Hindi Pradhan or chief. These indicate the power of the religious functionary in the state. It cannot be said, at least from the study of the Chota-Nagpur tribes as well as those of Assam, that the medicine-man developed into the king, for in both the areas we find the temporal chief superior in authority to the ecclesiatic functionary. But the terms themselves show that the religious functionary is given a considerable recognition in temporal status. It is possible Hindu missionaries in bygone days might have exercised temporal and spiritual authority from which these tribes again recovered, re-establishing their own indigenous superiority of their secular chief or headman.

[194]
[197]

The term for the spirit-doctor with second sight is Mati among most of the primitive tribes of Chota-Nagpur. The Mundas, the Birhors and the Oraons all call their spirit-doctor Mati, the Hos of Seraikella call him Ojha[2]. The Santal term Ojha has rightly been objected to by Rev. P.O. Bodding as a Hindi loan word derived from Upadhyaya[3]. But we think he goes too far when he says that the whole system of Ojhaism is derived from the Hindus. Similar practices in Hindu society may be sometimes detected in the lowest stratum and also under even the mystic Tantric ritual. They

756
171
[192]
[114]

[1]S.C. Roy's The Birhor, p. 340, Plate XXVIII.
[2]A Chatterjee and T. Das, Hos. of Seraikella, part I p. 38.
[3]Rev. P.O. Bodding, Studies in Santal disease and Connected Folklore, part I.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

756
171

have been always branded in Hindu scriptures as practices of the lowest order, a sort of getting power over ghosts, pisaches and bhuts. The Gita[1] calls the worshippers of the prets and bhuts as tamasic. Thus they are to be looked upon as survival of a pre-Dravidian stage of culture in Hindu Society. From the wide-spread occurrence of the word Mati it would seem that the Santals have lost their own original term and adopted a Hindi loan word as they possibly did in the case of the word for the supreme being, Thakur. The tendency to change the name can be traced amongst the Oraons due to a recent semi-Hindu and semi-aboriginal religious revival movement known as the Bhagat, comparable to the similar Kharwar movement amongst the Santals. The Mati is called Bhagat as the most dignified term for a Baisnab devotee. A change of outlook has also taken place in making the spirits no longer malevolent and the aspect of mercy and grace under Baisnab influence have been emphasised, comparable to the changing of many of the pagan gods of Europe into Roman Catholic patron saints.

[174]
[192]

224
793
171

Hunting being one of the most absorbing occupation of all these tribes a special functionary for hunting occasions is quite natural. Amongst the Santals the Dehri still maintains his own; amongst the Birhors the Diguar or Kotowar has sunk to the position of an assistant to the priest Naya.

[539]

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यक्षरक्षांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान् भूतगणांश्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥

[1]Chaptar 17, Verse No. 4.

4: Biswas D, F-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

by bongas are called in. There is no female Shaman as the female with supernatural power is always looked upon as wicked, malevolent and is persecuted as a witch. So it is to pit his higher knowledge against the wicked machinations of the witches that the *Jan guru* or *ojhas* are called who thus are important social functionaries curing individuals of their constant depression due to fear of sorcery and the evil eye or acting as village mental sanitation officials. Thus these Santal medicine-men, soothsayers and masters of incantations have to work hand in hand with the chiefs.

The name *ojha*, which the Santal uses, is not a Santal word; it is a Hindi word, used for diviner, enchanter, sorcerer, magician, etc. The word is derived from Sanskrit. The Santal has borrowed this word from the Hindi-speaking people. Rev. P.O. Bodding is of opinion that the Santal has adopted this exorcism from the Hindi-speaking people. His argument in favour of it is that the work of a Santal *ojha* in nature partly resembles that of the Hindu *ojha* and the special *bongas* invoked by the Santal *ojhas* all have names of Hindu origin in addition to their special *bongas*. But a tribe which believes so much in spirits (both malevolent and benevolent) must have some method of propitiation of those spirits as is usual among almost all the primitive tribes of the world.

The *ojha* is also a physician. The difference between the herbal doctors and the *ojha* lies in the fact that the former gives only medicine whilst the latter in addition to giving medicine tries to drive away the disease by magic incantations, etc., by the assistance of his special *bongas* whom he knows how to force to work.

41 Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

177 Bengali. The female members mostly cannot speak any
192 language except their own. They learn Hindi when
[191] they come in contact with the Hindi speaking labourers in the coal mines, railway workshops or when they come in contact with the Hindu Mahajans (money
177 lenders) and traders. Some of the Hindi and Bengali
• 192 words have also been introduced in their vocabulary which can be noticed in the language of their *mantras* and *prayers*.

302 Vermilion is one of the most important item for
583 marriage and in the worship of deities both for the
177 Hindus and the Santals. Some think that the Santals
174 have copied it from the Hindus, but it is doubtful whether it is their borrowed thing at all. Because in such important social customs as marriage and worship of tribal deities, vermilion is considered by the Santals
[583] as an essential ingredient. There is a kind of marriage in which a Santal can marry a woman simply by applying vermilion on her forehead, which shows that vermilion is the only binding source of marriage here. Such an important ingredient of culture is not usually borrowed and we can take it as a case of culture similarity.
177 Similarly, another custom of *Garde Jawas* is prevalent both among the Santals and the Hindus. There are other similarities in their social, religious and economic structure with the Hindus, but all of them cannot be attributed to their borrowing from the Hindus. Infact, saying so, implies that the Santals had no culture of of their own, which can not be true. It seems that there has been a two-way traffic of culture exchange-Hindus having borrowed some elements from the Santals and vice versa.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

and legends of Hinduism. The linguistic evidence shows how their material culture has been vitally affected and has some bearing on the more elusive realm of thought and belief. The grammatical structure of Santali has little in common with that of the Indo-Aryan tongues. It is an agglutinative and not an inflectional language. There have, however, been large and extensive borrowings of words. An instructive example can be taken from their method of husking rice. The term *ḍhinki*, used for a foot-pedal rice husker, has been borrowed from Bengali, and a *ḍhinki* is found in almost every home. The rice that is husked at the time of making sacrifices must be prepared in the home of the village priest, and in its preparation the use of the older and more primitive *ukhuṛ* is obligatory. This is a wooden mortar in which the rice is husked by hand with a wooden pestle, or *tok*. Both these words are Austro-Asiatic in origin. It is likely that when the household adopted the new method of husking rice the tribe did not change over from the old method of husking the sacred rice for fear of a loss in efficacy. One reason given is that as the *ḍhinki* is operated by the foot, rice husked in the *ḍhinki* is unclean and so unfit for offering to the spirits. It may be that the association of a mortar and pestle with sexual symbolism enhanced its magical value. The symbolism in this case is familiar to the Santal mind, for one way of expressing differences of sex is to refer to boys as "pestles" and to girls as "mortars". The *ukhuṛ* has to be used by the medicine man in preparing remedies; it is also used at marriages, when the feet of the bridegroom's party are washed over an *ukhuṛ*, and an *ukhuṛ* filled with water is required during the death ceremonies. In Bengal the rice which forms the daily food of the people is boiled before husking, and the Santals follow the same method in preparing it; but the rice used in sacrifices, *alwa caole*, is never so treated, being dried in the sun.

Among their domestic animals, the fowl, the dog and the goat have non-Bengali names, while the names for pigeons, sheep, pigs and, most important of all, their cattle are borrowed. Fowls, goats and pigs are all used in their sacrifices. In the realm of wild life the Santal has found little need to borrow a vocabulary from his neighbours. Wild animals, birds, trees and shrubs, many fish and insects, also snakes, have Santali names. The same is true of most of the weapons used in hunting. Although the term for paddy is Santal, the names of all the implements now used in rice cultivation and the terms for the

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

different kinds of rice fields are Bengali. Maize, a cereal that is important in their economy, has a borrowed name, but other lesser cereals retain their Santali names. In Bankura the Santals have lost the use of their own numerals beyond seven, though apparently these are known and commonly used elsewhere. Even so, in Bankura the Santal word for "twelve" is still used in phrases connected with the recital of tribal traditions, as in the phrase *gelhar paris*, meaning the "twelve clans". Iron has a Santali name, but other metals now in use, such as lead, copper and brass, have Bengali names. In addition to brass and earthenware utensils, the Santals make extensive use of the leaves of the *sal* tree (Santali *sarjom*), which they plait to form many varieties of plates, cups, pipes and cigarettes, and they possess a wide vocabulary to distinguish between the different kinds. Brass and earthen pots they buy from others.[1]

The difficulties of determining the extent of their borrowings in the field of religion may be illustrated by the fact that the language of spells and of prayers offered at the time of sacrificing contains a strong admixture of Hindi-Bengali words. This would seem to indicate that there have been many borrowings at this point; but it is also possible that the one who makes the prayers, wishing to put himself into a favourable relation with the spirits, uses a special vocabulary and so removes himself from the common run of his people when he is acting as a mediator between them and the spirit world. Many of the songs sung nowadays are composed in Bengali. There is a large stock of riddles, some of which are asked and answered in Santali, others of which are asked and answered in Bengali, while yet others make use of both languages.[2]

Only incidental reference has been made to the impact of Moslem culture on Santal life. Reminiscences occur of the period of Moslem rule, such as the following statement: "Concerning the *Turuk* (*Turuk*, or Turk, the name by which Santals refer to Moslems), it is said that they ruin our spirits because they cut the throats of fowls the wrong way. If we eat

[1] Another discussion of the linguistic evidence, giving many examples, and the whole stated from a somewhat different point of view, is to be found in Professor Sten Konow's introduction to Bodding's collection of Folk-Tales.

[2] In a suggestive article published in *Africa* for June 1946, Professor F. C. Bartlett has expanded his thesis in the Julian Huxley lecture of 1944 that each primitive culture displays both "hard" and "soft" points. The methods which he has outlined for determining, in the examination of any particular culture, what constitute the hard and soft points, and in particular the story method, may furnish valuable results when applied to the study of Santal culture.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

805
731

The years pass, indistinguishable one from another except when famine or other calamity makes a landmark on which the memory will fasten in the years to come. Ten years ago many of the older men dated their birth according to whether they were born before or after "Seventy-two", the Bengali year 1272, when a disastrous famine broke up many families. Another memorable year was the year of the influenza epidemic that followed the close of the 1914–18 war, and young people today can calculate their age in relation to the year of the *malof*, or epidemic. The division of the year into months is somewhat vague, for whereas the only names for the months now current are the twelve months of the Bengali calendar, the Santal reckoning is based on the moon. As one man remarked: "We sometimes have to slip a month." In 1939, when this statement was made, there was confusion in the Santal calendar between *Bhador* (the Bengali month extending through a part of August and September) and *San*, the month that precedes it. Names are given to the phases of the moon according to its shape. Thus I was told: "The *Ende* (the Ind festival which in West Bengal is associated with Dharma worship) is observed during the month of *Bhador*, when the moon is shaped like an open umbrella."

[175]
[829]
805

The days of the week also have Bengali names, and the day is divided into periods, the names of which relate in some cases to the meals taken, in other cases to the duties which have to be performed or to a more general association of the time. When Santals wish to make an appointment at a particular time it is sufficient to point to the position in the sky where the sun will have climbed. Some time before dawn it is "little cockcrow", and this is followed by "cockcrow". *Basiam*, the time when breakfast is taken, is divided into three parts: "child *basiam*", "*basiam*" and "bent *basiam*". The word *basiam*, meaning "leftover", is a reminder that the breakfast consists of a small quantity of cold rice or rice gruel, cooked with the evening meal on the previous day and kept for the morning, when it is eaten with a little salt. The late afternoon is called the "time when women draw water". One way of describing a short period is to relate it to the time taken in boiling a pot of rice. Work is continued until the shadow of a house or a tree falls across a particular spot. It happens frequently that children draw a line outside their schoolhouse, so that when the shadow of the building falls across the line they know it is time to go home. A man who was in the habit of sleeping in

[192]
[264]

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

preparing the cakes which the men take with them at the time of the hunt. The flowers have a high sugar content, and their most common use is in the distillation of spirits, the *paura* or brandy of the Santals. The work of distilling is carried on by one or two families in the village, and they sell not only to their fellow villagers, but they operate illegal liquor shops on market days. *Matkom* beer, a drink which is only slightly fermented, as it is prepared within twenty-four hours, is refreshing, but it is used chiefly for the purpose of counteracting the after-effects of a drinking bout.

The women prepare the rice beer which is brewed in all the homes. First they collect the roots that are used as fermenting agents from the forest. In this, as in most of their gathering activities, the women of the village work together. There is a certain ceremonial attached to the gathering of these roots. Parties sometimes consist of women from more than one village, and so a day for the expedition has to be fixed. The procedure suggests that this is regarded as the women's counterpart to the hunt. Before the wood is entered one of the older women invokes *Gòsàì* ("Lord", a general term used in addressing the spirits) and requests that they be led quickly to the places where they will find the desired plants. The first woman to light upon one falls on the ground, pretending to be drunk. These roots are known by the general name of *rànu ran*, "medicine of medicines". It takes three days for the beer to mature or "cook". It cannot be stored, so it is brewed fresh for festival occasions and also in the majority of houses as often as the family can afford. *Handi*, or rice beer, occupies an important place in the ritual as well as in the social life of the tribe. It is essential for all libations to the spirits. A myth relates how the secret of brewing beer was imparted to the first human beings by the chief spirit of the Santals himself. It is therefore the indispensable Santal drink. It is extremely difficult for a Santal to understand not only how a person can live without beer, but why he should try to do so. The case of Pitam, who lived near Benachapra, illustrates this. He was a man of great influence because of his powers as a witch-finder. He had, however, abandoned some of his tribal ways, and, influenced by Vaishnava Hinduism, he had given up meat eating and the drinking of intoxicants. During the annual tribal council some of his enemies charged him with undermining Santal society, and one of the counts against him was that by abstaining from beer he was doing harm to the spirits.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

over a wide field, involving inheritance, marriages and instances of indiscipline. Members are allowed to appeal against decisions made in village councils. Punishments inflicted range from outcasting to fines, and crude punishments are sometimes exacted on the spot, as in a case of a youth who had transgressed the rules of behaviour towards a woman relative with whom he was not in a joking relationship. He was compelled to drag his nose along a line of urine provided by the village headman whose authority had been flouted. The hearing of cases continues till the small hours of the morning and the discussions appear interminable, with accusation and counter-accusation, the calling of witnesses and references to tribal law and custom. It is, however, one of the great educating and cementing institutions in the life of the tribe. It is known to them by the name of "high court", a name that has been naturalized in most Indian languages. It is also called the *sendra dupup'*, the hunt sitting, and the *lo bir dupup'*, the burnt forest sitting, the latter name being due to the fact that the hunt takes place when the undergrowth in the forest has been burnt to help the fertilizing of the soil.

Meanwhile, when the evening meal is over the young men gather in another part of the clearing and spend the night in revelry. There is much strong liquor in evidence. In some cases the place of meeting has become the site of a government liquor shop. The dances, of a class known as *doüger*, are men's dances, and the songs, known as *bir*, or forest songs, are men's songs. They are frankly coarse and deal largely with the physical aspects of love, courtship and lust. Many of the songs that are sung on this night are never sung by the Santals in any mixed company, or, indeed, at any other time, a fact that indicates among them a standard of delicacy in sexual behaviour which certain modern schools of thought appear at times to deny to primitive people.

Towards morning some of the folk, young and old, rest for an hour or two of much-needed sleep, but when the sun has risen they take some breakfast and begin to disperse. They make their way to their own villages, hunting as they go; but on this second day the proceedings are apt to be unexciting, for they do not find much to kill. By late afternoon the men are home again with their spoils, and when these have been divided they work off their fatigue in sleep.

The supposed monotony of the struggle for a livelihood is broken by so many devices of nature and of man that it is

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

doubtful whether the concept of monotony has any place in a Santal's mind. His love of a *porob*, or festival, is a byword in the tribe, and it is fostered by many occasions in the Santal calendar as well as by opportunities for "seeing", as they say, Hindu festivals. Some of these gatherings bring together the Santals from great distances. One of the most remarkable in the area takes place on the outskirts of Sarenga at the time of the Lakshmi Puja, at the full moon of the Bengali month of *Kartlik* (October-November). This is a Hindu festival, and it is kept with due pomp and ceremony by the family of the local landlord, who is of a mercantile caste. This family built up the celebration by inviting their Santal tenants to come and dance on a field on the village boundary. For many years it has been of more than local significance. Villagers from ten to fifteen miles away turn up in force, and some come from much greater distances. Until the year 1930 they used to dance and sing throughout the night, and on one occasion a missionary counted over five hundred large drums. In the following year a small but determined group of Santal reformers, one of whose aims was to stop their womenfolk from dancing in public, practically brought the gathering to a standstill, but it was revived in 1932 in the modified form in which it continues. At about noon the air begins to resound to the beating of the drums as parties of villagers make their way along the roads and jungle tracks and approach the scene of the gathering. From the four corners of the compass they converge on the open field, men and women in festive attire, the women especially resplendent in new *saris* with gaily designed borders, their hair bedecked with flowers and their arms heavy with ornaments. The drumming intensifies as new parties arrive and more and more lines of dancers are formed. Finally the crescendo of sound from the drums batters on the ear-drums of the bystanders, and even at a distance of four miles it conveys an impression of continuous thunder in the sky. Then the clamour dies away as gradually as it began, and by nine o'clock the field is quiet once again. Since the night dancing was stopped the numbers have diminished slightly. Most of the parties return to their own villages and continue the dance there.

The weeks are enlivened by visits to the local markets. One of the entries in Babulal's record relates to a market day during the early hot weather: "Today was market day. From a very early hour everyone was preparing to go to market. It is very hot at the present time, and if we do not go early the

CHAPTER 4

DANCING, MUSIC AND POETRY

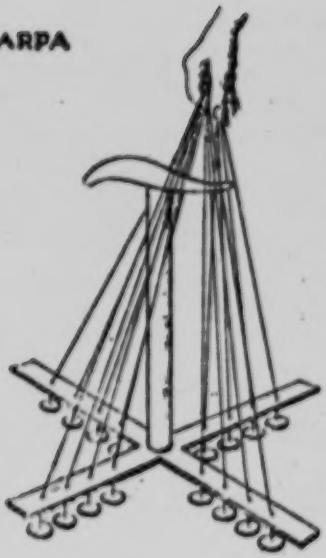
THE word *rąską*, meaning "pleasure", is often on the lips of the Santals, and it is dear to their hearts. They turn from their difficulties and sorrows to find solace in one or other of the many ways in which they can experience *rąską*. Among these dancing is one of the most important. Their word for dancing is the same as that used for the play of children—*enec'*—and dancing is indeed the play of the tribe. In every village there is a dancing floor, an open space that is well cared for. At festival times it is swept and freshly plastered with cowdung by young unmarried girls, and when it is not in use for dancing it is the place where the young men gather in the evenings to discuss their affairs and interests.

Some of the dances are connected with particular festivals, and they are performed only at those times or during the whole of the month in which the festival takes place. There are other dances that are suitable at any time during the year. Some are dances for women alone and others for men alone, while in a few both men and women dance. The chief element of variety is introduced by means of varying the rhythm; to the casual observer most of the dances look the same. A group of men or of women dance together, forming a line with their arms linked, stepping sideways or forward and then backward, keeping time to the beating accompaniment of the drums, moving either in a circle or from one side of the dancing-floor to the other, and from time to time breaking out into song. Whenever there is an occasion for rejoicing there will be dancing. It is much in evidence during the celebrations and ceremonies after the birth of a child or at his fuller reception into the tribe, and again during marriage festivities. The general type of dance on all these occasions is known as *don*, which has within it many variations. At these times it is the women who do the dancing, while the men furnish an accompaniment with drums and flutes, and many of the songs refer directly to the purpose for which the folk have gathered together. During marriage ceremonies the *bapla*, or type of dance specifically associated with marriages, is also in evidence. The *doṅger* is the dance of the men on the night of the annual hunt. It is a wild type of dance, when there is much leaping in the air. Two of the young men stripped of clothing dance about in front of the lines, and the

Sa Culshaw M-S (1902-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

535
[224]
[831]
796
534
[192]

SARPA



dances are preceded and ended by the shouting of obscene words. The Spring and the Harvest festivals possess their own cycle of songs and dances. During the latter the women make use of a musical instrument known as the *sarpa*, which is brought out only at this time. It is a percussion instrument that consists of a vertical pole about fifteen inches high fixed into two crossed horizontal pieces of wood. Holes are bored in the foot-long horizontal pieces, and through these holes pass lengths of string to the end of which are attached small circular wooden clappers. With the handle at the top of the vertical pole in the left hand and the upper end of the strings held in the right hand, the clappers can be drawn up sharply against the wooden bars, so producing a ringing sound. The workmanship of the *sarpas* varies; some are plain, while others display a handle carved in the shape of a dove and geometrical designs on the horizontal bars. The dancers form two lines; the older women [535] form a line in front and sing and dance with their arms linked. Behind them comes a line of younger women, some of them beating the *sarpas*, some with small brass cymbals, while the two women at the ends of the line wave the end of their *saris* to fan the others.

534 The *buaŭ*[1] is a musical instrument associated particularly with the month that precedes that in which the Harvest festival [192] is celebrated. This is the month known as *Dāsāē*, from the [805] Hindi word *dasserah*. The *buaŭ* belongs to a type of musical instrument with a wide distribution in different parts of the world. Its prototype existed when men first plucked the strings of their bows in order to hear a pleasing sound. To the arc of the bow a large hollow gourd is attached, and this adds resonance to the sound of the plucked bow string. The gourd is

[1] See Illustration opposite.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

decorated with paper streamers. One of the songs sung to the accompaniment of the *buan* is in honour of the instrument itself and recounts the birth and growth of the gourd on the manure heap. Some of the dances enact hunting scenes and fights with bow and arrow.

During weddings and festivals the dancing takes place at night as well as in the daytime. Drink is plentiful, and the dance goes on until the moon is setting and the first light of morning appears in the sky. At these times dancing is associated with romance as well as with illicit flirtations and unions; amid the general rejoicing it is easy for couples to slip away unnoticed. Dancing, however, is not by any means confined to the more formal and set occasions. During the hot season in particular there is an almost nightly gathering in some part of the village, when the younger members of the community dance together. At these times the *lagre*, a simple dance, is much used. Of this there are many variations, and different varieties appear to be popular in different localities. One of the most popular in the area is a variety of *lagre* known as *porob*, which appears to be unknown elsewhere. These dances are suitable for any occasion.[1]

Santal music is largely but not entirely associated with dancing. The Santals are a musical people and find in music an outlet for the emotional and imaginative sides of their nature. From an early age boys begin to play on a whistle, the high and plaintive notes of which can be heard coming from the fields and woods as the boys tend the herds. Later most of them become proficient in playing the flute. The name *tirio* is used to denote different kinds of flute as well as the boys' whistle. Flutes contain six holes, and the usual type is the true flute that is held to one side—the instrument associated with Krishna in Hindu mythology. Some are beautifully made. One man playing at Sarenga during the Lakshmi Puja had a beautiful specimen; at the higher end there was a brass figure of Krishna playing the flute, while at the other end there was mounted a brass dove. Another type is shaped like an inverted T, the air being blown into the base of the T, while the arms,

[1] Bodding's *Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 331, lists thirty-one dances.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 43]

St Culshaw M-S (1892-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

which are longer than the base, contain the finger-holes. Another instrument in the use of which many of the men are proficient is the *banam*,[1] a one-string fiddle. The bowl is hollowed out from a piece of wood or formed sometimes from half a coconut, and it is usually covered with goat skin, though occasionally there are specimens covered with monkey skin, which is prized for the purpose. The bowl is pressed against the player's armpit and the bow is drawn across the string with the right hand, while the fingers of the left hand depress the string at the required point. The string of the fiddle is in these days generally a metal wire. The whole instrument is about eighteen inches long. It is a difficult instrument from which to produce a melody, and it is therefore used chiefly to accompany men's songs with a somewhat monotonous form of "seconds".

The most conspicuous of the musical instruments of the Santals, both for size and volume of sound, are the drums. The two kinds in common use are played together. They are known as the *tumdak'* and the *tamak*.[2] They are beaten at dances by the younger men, who drum and leap about in front of the lines of dancing women and girls. The *tumdak'* is made of burnt clay and is somewhat conical in shape. The narrow end is usually covered with goat skin and the wide end with bullock hide. These end coverings are kept in place by narrow leather strips running the length of the drum, and other strips are wound round the drum. It is suspended by thongs from the shoulders of the youth who is playing it. He beats out the main rhythm with his right hand on the narrow end, and the left hand beats a deeper note on the broad end to punctuate the bars. The *tamak* is a kettle-drum made of iron in the shape of a bowl and covered with bullock hide. In addition to being used as an accompaniment for the *tumdak'*, it is also the hunting drum. It is slung from the shoulders of the player and beaten with a pair of sticks. A variant of the *tamak* is the *lepda*,[3] which has a flat bottom. The *dhāk*[4] is a large long drum hollowed out of wood. This drum is in popular use at weddings and also at large dancing gatherings. It has to be carried by two men and is slung from a bamboo pole which they carry on their shoulders. It is the reverberations of this drum which can be heard throughout the surrounding countryside.

With the exception of the *sarpa* and the cymbals, women do

[1] See illustration opposite.
[2] See illustration opposite.
[3] See illustration opposite.
[4] See illustration next page.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

not learn to play any of these instruments. Young girls may be seen sometimes trying out their brothers' instruments, but they put them away with childish things. Their singing is, however, their peculiar glory. Not only do they sing while dancing, but on many other occasions. As the women of a village return home in the evening from their visit to the weekly market or after a day of gathering leaves in the forest, their high- and soft-toned singing can be heard coming over the fields. During the transplantation of the rice seedlings they sing as they bend over their task. Their songs during this activity are of a special class known as *hephet'*, a word which means the plucking of the seedlings and weeding. Men also sing, and when one is narrating the traditions of the tribe or relating a story he will often break into song to illustrate a point or amplify the story. Santal melodies are as a rule pitched high and in a-minor key. The range of the tunes is meagre and rarely makes use of more than three or four different notes in the scale. One unfailing characteristic is a long-drawn-out succession of repeated single notes at the end of each line. Nevertheless, they afford scope for the expression of the dominant emotions experienced by the Santals, whose devotion to dancing and song has developed among them a high degree of musical aptitude. In order that they may easily and quickly memorize the great number of different rhythms with which they have to be familiar, they have invented a series of mnemonics which they repeat at the opening of a dance or a song. One example of such mnemonics, associated with the *doṅ* dances, is as follows:[1]

"Bhendaṅ netaṅ | dak' taṅ netaṅ | din dupuṅ | din dupuṅ—
bhendaṅ netaṅ | dak' taṅ netaṅ | dak' dupuṅ | dak' dupuṅ."

[1] Bodding's *Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 112.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

A fourteen-year-old boy who was once asked his name replied: "By my name I cannot do anything." Pressed for some explanation of his words, he said: "By my name I cannot walk." It was then explained by some bystanders that the name by which he was known was *Ledha*, "the lame one". There is a large number of figurative and hidden names for common objects. These names are used in conversation between those who are in the joking relationship with one another and particularly at the time of weddings. "White horse" is beer and "red horse" is spirits; "sheep's *ghi*"[1] is salt; "jackal's horn" is pepper; "frog spawn" is water. "We are sweeping the courtyard" means that we are washing our teeth; "Have you taken the harrow over the field?" means Have you brushed your hair? "Have you married off your middle son?" means Have you eaten your rice? There are many phrases to describe the evacuation of waste products from the body, one of which may be quoted. A man excuses himself from the company of his fellows with the words, "I am going to pay my rent!"

The Santal love of colour and decoration also gives expression to their sense of the joyous in life. Men are sparing in the use of personal adornment, though youths wearing ear-rings or necklaces made from seeds pass without remark. Women are fond of ornaments. Most of them wear a small flower-shaped brass ornament in the left side of the nose and have brass ear-rings. They all wear a *hasli* of silver or brass, a large ring that hangs round the neck. Bangles of silver, shell or glass are worn. They delight to fix flowers of red and white in their hair, and they enhance the lines of their eyes with a dark paste. On special occasions some of the heavier ornaments are brought out—large bell-shaped ear-rings, silver ornaments for the hair, anklets and rings for the feet and toes. The women also decorate the houses with gay-coloured patterns. The houses receive a new plaster coat of earth at the end of the rainy season in preparation for the Harvest festival. The house plinth or veranda and the wall up to a foot or two above the plinth are plastered a very dark grey, the colour being prepared by mixing cowdung with straw ash. Above this dark colour, on a first coat of light earth, the housewives vie with one another to attract the attention of their fellow villagers and of passers-by. There is no uniformity and the colours used depend rather on the coloured clays that are available in the neighbourhood of the village, but red predominates. Some house walls give

[1] Clarified butter.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 50]

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

one of the original twelve *khûṭ*. They are not allowed to have spots made on them and they will not be vaccinated, but they may be cicatrized; however, their daughters and sisters are not allowed to be tattooed until after they are married. The unmarried men are not allowed to wear any garment made from jute. They must not plaster their houses with any other than white earth; and they may not draw any pictures on the walls except plantain trees and date palms or figures that look like pictures of temples, drawn with three fingers only. They make their sacrifice at the time of the *Sohrae*; this is performed in the house, and they sacrifice a pig. One year it must be a male uncastrated pig and the next year a female, and if for any reason they cannot get hold of a pig they may sacrifice a black hen. They should sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit in the shelter of a white ant hill,[1] but in these days they bring some earth from the ant hill into the house and sacrifice there."

In a Sarenga schoolboy's essay on the origin of his own clan, he began by relating the creation of mankind and finally continued: "All the Sorens were the soldiers of the Kisku, who were the owners of the village at Campa Gar. The Marndi lived at Cirunala, and between the two villages there flowed the Sitanala river. They began to quarrel with each other because the people of the two villages had to use the same river for bathing and for drinking water. Now, since the Soren were the soldiers of the Kisku, they are like the Gurkhas of Nepal. Just as the Gurkhas are fierce and do not fear death, so too the Soren." So is virtue inculcated by fostering pride in the clan. One of the sub-clans of the Soren is the Poita Soren. *Poita* is the word—as pronounced by the Santals—for the sacred thread of the Brahmin. They relate that in the very early days the ancestors of the Soren were celebrating the *Jom Sim* festival and some of the company began to prepare the food and cook it. In imitation of Brahmin cooks they put on sacred threads and served all the people. From that time they became known as Poita Soren. When they sacrifice to their sub-clan spirit they sacrifice to him alone, and the offering has to consist of a male uncastrated pig. The rite is performed at sunrise. They may eat the flesh at any time during that day and the following night, and if they are unable to finish it they must bury it before the following sunrise

[1] For references to the sanctity of white ant hills see *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, by W. Crooke, C.I.E., p. 380. The belief is widespread in India. "From early times the earth from an ant hill has been regarded as specially pure, representing 'the savour of the earth', and it was, and is, used in building altars."

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

a portion of land in recognition of his appointment, and land cannot easily pass out of the possession of a particular clan. The office therefore tends to remain in the family, for fresh lands are not obtainable after one or two generations have passed away.

The villagers recognize the priest's office, as they do those of the other dignitaries, by payment in return for services rendered. When one of the villagers is fined by the council, the priest receives his own share of the total sum. When game is killed in the hunt, the priest's share consists of a strip of flesh cut from the animal's backbone; it is formed into the shape of a cooking-place before it is handed over to him. He receives the heads of all the animals that are sacrificed by him on behalf of his fellow villagers. His duty is to make the offerings to the tribal spirits on behalf of the whole village at the time of the festivals. In order to prepare himself he has to separate himself from his fellows. Santals ordinarily sleep on string beds, but on the night before a sacrifice the priest sleeps on the floor, and he must abstain from sexual intercourse. On the morrow he has to fast until his work is done.

In addition to the priest, there is in every village a co-priest with special functions. This official is known as the *kudam nacke*. The word *kudam* refers to the area behind the dwelling-house. During village festivals, while the priest is making the main offerings, the *kudam nacke* sacrifices to the *pargana bonga*, the spirit who is regarded as the guardian or perhaps as the personification of the wider territorial unit into which groups of Santal villages are formed. It may be that this particular spirit needs the services of the co-priest because the *pargana bonga* was resident in the area before the villagers settled within its borders, while they brought the other spirits with them. The other function fulfilled by the *kudam nacke* reveals ideas which comprise perhaps a separate strata in the complex structure of Santal religion. During the festivals he offers drops of blood, which he produces by pricking his own arm with a thorn, to the boundary spirits, or the spirits of the outskirts of the forests. The name of this blood offering is *bul mayam*, *mayam* being the ordinary word for blood. The meaning of the term *bul* in this context is obscure, and Santals are unable to offer any explanation. *Bul* is a word connoting drunkenness; it can also be used as an adjective to describe an earthen pot that has become saturated with water, and it may refer to the saturation of the rice offering with the blood. In some incantations the phrase is coupled with one that refers to menstrual blood. The same

5t Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

keep away marauding cattle and goats, and large earthen effigies of elephants and horses are set in position as worthy mounts for the spirits. The grove is not usually much more than a hundred yards away from the westernmost house in the village, but sometimes one finds that the dwellings of the people have been moved owing to sickness or some other reason and the grove remains in its original site. The determination of the site of the grove is an important element in founding a new village. Naturally there are few opportunities for observing the process at the present time, but the tradition is kept alive among the Santals, who tell that the choice of the site is made by the spirits themselves. They do so by taking possession of certain of the villagers and expressing their wishes through them. These men take stones and place them at the foot of three *sarjom* trees, which should be in a row, two for *Maraṅ Buru* and *Jaher Buḍhi* close together, and the third for the "Five and Six". Other trees are then set apart for a second female spirit known as *Gôsāē Era*, and also for the *pargana boṅga* and the boundary spirits.

Maraṅ Buru is the spirit who possesses the most clearly defined individuality. The name means "Great Mountain", but it is interesting to note that the word *buru* means not only a mountain but is also used for spirits in general, especially when it is coupled with the more usual *boṅga*. The use of *buru* combined with *boṅga* suggests that *buru* originally meant "mountain", that it was then used for "mountain spirit" and then as a synonym for *boṅga*. Another name for *Maraṅ Buru* is *Liṭa*, which is a proper name and does not appear to refer to any attributes. The name *Liṭa* is frequently used in stories and also in conversation, but it is not used in invocations. The Santal name for a rainbow is the "bow of *Liṭa*". *Maraṅ Buru* is invoked on all occasions when offerings are made, and he is a complete sharer in all the fortunes of the tribe, good and evil. He seems to be regarded as a kindly but capricious old gentleman. The references to him in the mythology clearly indicate his dominant position. He appeared on the scene at a very early stage in the life of the first pair. He found them living in a state of innocence and told them that they had not yet learnt to taste the joys of life. After introducing himself to them as their grandfather and so establishing an intimate relationship between himself and them, he taught them how to brew beer and left them for a few days. When he returned he chuckled to see the change in their appearance, for during his absence they had become drunken.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

The personality of *Maran Buru* overshadows that of the Supreme Being in the consciousness of the Santals. The latter is universally acknowledged as the Creator, but he is far removed. *Maran Buru* is the one who has made them what they are today. In the folk-tales there are frequent references to the Supreme Being in his character as the merciful provider, but these are stories of what happened "a long time ago". One example, in which the Supreme Being came and worked with the two sons of a widow and so altered their fortunes, has been translated above.[1] In another story which tells of a child who was left an orphan, he came down in the form of a man in order to comfort the child.[2] Sometimes in folk-tales extraordinary events are attributed to the action of the Supreme Being, as in a story that relates how a woman gave birth to a mongoose and one of her fellow villagers said: "This is indeed wonderful, that God should cause an animal to be born in the womb of a woman."[3]

Some of the names of the Supreme Being reveal the influence of the surrounding culture and reflect certain elements in Santal belief. The word *Thakur* in Bengali, meaning "one who is worthy of worship", is applied indifferently to a god, an image, a Brahmin caste and any Brahmin cook. Santals sometimes apply it to spirits in general, but they usually reserve it as a term for the Creator. It is so used in a saying that is current in the area which explains why the Santals may not celebrate their Spring festival until after the corresponding Hindu festival, the Dol Jatra or Holi Puja, has been held. If the Santals do not wait till the Hindu festival is over, they say that *Thakur* will be offered what has been left over from the offerings to the *bongas*. Here *Thakur* is undoubtedly regarded as the Lord of the *bongas* and is incidentally identified with Sri Krishna, in whose honour the Dol Jatra is celebrated. In some parts the name *Thakur Jiu* is used, *jiu* connoting "spirit" in the sense of the life principle. The word *jiu* is uncommon, the usual form of the term being *jiwi*, but it is used as a suffix in the word *mac-jiu*, literally "mother spirit", which is the common word for a woman. *Thakur Jiu*, which should perhaps have been printed as one word, is the term used in the printed account of the Traditions, and as these were first published in 1887, its subsequent currency may be due in some measure to that fact.

[1] See Chapter 5, p. 53.

[2] Bodding, *Santal Folk-Tales*, Vol. III, p. 73. Finding out why the child wept, he caused the child's mother to appear to him, but first told him not to weep or he would die.

[3] Bodding, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 80.

5t Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

The most usual term for "God" is *Cando* or *Cando boŋga*, and this reveals a connection between God and the sun. *Cando*, which means the Creator, also means the sun and "a month". When used in conjunction with *siñ*, meaning either "day" or "sun", *siñ cando* means simply the sun; with the word *ñinda*, "night", it means the moon. Occasionally the Santals talk of *Siñ boŋga* as synonymous with *Cando boŋga*. This association of ideas - it would be unwise to regard it as an identification—is shown in the practice adopted when an oath is taken. *Cando* is called on as a witness, and at the same time the man taking the oath raises his eyes to the sun. Again, when a Santal is being reinstated into the tribe, he is made to stand at the entrance to the village with a brass vessel full of water held up in his hands. The elders of the village approach him, whereupon he first performs a low obeisance in the direction of the sun, after which he speaks to the elders and makes open acknowledgment of his guilt and his determination to make amends. Following this, the oldest of the men from the village takes the brass vessel from the hands of the guilty person and bows in his turn in the direction of the sun.

In spite of one or two apparent exceptions, it seems true that *Cando* cannot be appeased or influenced by sacrifices. The fact that the weekly sacrifice in the shrine of Lokhon Mañjhi at Sarenga includes one in honour of *Cando* illustrates the process by which modifications may appear in the general practice; it is not a typical shrine. It is said that a sacrifice is offered to *Siñ boŋga* during the clan festival known as *Jom Sim*, which is hardly ever performed. For the most part, belief in a Supreme Being is not operative. He is frequently mentioned in conversation as the source of good and bad weather, and also of good and bad health; it is common to hear such expressions as "By the mercy of *Cando* we are well" and "If *Cando* has mercy we shall obtain good crops". By such means do Santals acknowledge that all their magic, their prayers and their hard work are an insufficient guarantee that they will attain their heart's desire and that God's ways are inscrutable.

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

When it has been established that a witch is at work and that she lives in a certain house or village, the villagers of the sick person proceed to the *jan*, or witchfinder, who must give precise information about the individual who is a witch. None of the *jans* in the area are Santals, but the latter consult them quite freely. These men are notorious for having their scouts in the countryside, and they manage to secure all the information that they require before the party of villagers comes to them. They uphold their reputation not only by finding witches, but through being credited with second sight in other matters. They are consulted about lost and stolen property and about straying cattle.

All the witches of the Santals are women. This suggests that women find some compensation in a "private" cult for the fact that they are cut off from active participation in the tribal worship of the spirits. The general term for a witch is *ḍan*, and ordinarily the *ḍan* is reputed to be a member of a secret society with its own ritual and magic. Undoubtedly there are women who believe themselves to be *ḍan*. The *ḍan ḍhakin* is one who possesses some kind of evil nature and is able to put the "evil eye" on others. The fear of these witches is responsible for the fact that Santal houses are built without windows. When sometimes they leave an opening in the wall, they see that it is very small and so placed that no person standing outside will be able to look at any of the individuals inside, especially at night. The *ḍan jugin* are persons who use magic and know sorcery.[1] They acquire influence over certain *boŋgas*, and they make use of material objects in doing so. One of the tasks of an *ojha* who declares that there are buried *boŋgas* at work in a house is to locate them. He finds them buried in the house or the courtyard in the form of stones with human hair tied to them. The *ḍan* can gain control of a person and cause madness, a point that is well brought out in a story that is related here in the form in which it was told. "There was a youth in our village about sixteen years old, named Monmotha. One day last year he was going through the jungle from Calta to Beltwalā; he returned at about noon, and on his way he had to pass a *boŋga than*. As he was passing it he was struck with fear, and when he reached home he was out of his senses and began to talk a

[1] The distinction between witchcraft as an influence and sorcery as a magic art using material objects made by E. Evans Pritchard in *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (Oxford University Press) seems to find some correspondence here.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

CHAPTER 10

BIRTH AND INITIATION

858 The birth of a child is an occasion for rejoicing, and the event is announced by saying: "The new relation has arrived." Children are spoken of as the gift of *Cando*, which indicates that they are considered to be assets to the family. It is true that boys are rather more welcome than girls; every family desires that the first child should be a boy who will ensure the survival of that [428] particular family within the clan. A boy can inherit his father's lands, and one day he will be required to assist at his father's funeral ceremonies and perpetuate the worship of his own ancestors. Girls are welcomed, though not to the same degree. Through their marriages they will in due course extend the range of the family's relationships, but they bring but a small economic return to their parents, and the bride price received at marriage is not comparable to the expense of bringing them to maturity. Where a family consists of both boys and girls in equal proportion the girls are well treated, and when later on they go to other homes their places will be filled by daughters-in-law. When, on the other hand, a woman gives birth to a succession of daughters she is likely to feel the displeasure of her husband's relations. A third or fourth daughter born into a home where the husband's mother reigns supreme does not enjoy much prospect of survival. Children are valued from the first because of their potential working ability. A villager, on hearing that a birth has taken place, responds at once with the question: "What is it? Does it carry on the shoulder (a boy) or does it carry on the head (a girl)?" Or he may say: "Is it a hunter or is it a water carrier?"[1]

842 There are Hindu shrines in the area to which Santal women [978] resort along with others when other means of securing the birth [976] of a longed-for child have proved of no avail. A spirit who can grant the boon of children resides near the village of Raniband at the summit of a hill which rises abruptly from the plain and [982] is the highest point in the whole area. Cases have been reported [595] of Santal man and wife making the climb together in order to present an offering. In most cases, however, the husband preserves an air of indifference; if his wife fails to bear a child he is

[1] Another way of referring to the sex of children, though not at the time [195] of birth, is for a parent to say: "I have three *iyi* and three *erha*", which [192] signifies three boys and three girls. *Iyi* is a cultivated millet (*Panicum crusgalli*, L.) and *erha* is a cultivated grain (*Setaria italica*, Kunth).

St Culshaw M-S (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

842 [595]

persuaded to take a second wife. Sometimes he may not be reluctant to take such a step for reasons quite unconnected with the need for children, though usually he is. In addition to supernatural aids there are known to be remedies for ensuring conception, and these are sought from the individuals to whom they belong. The secrets of these remedies are closely guarded. Bodding[1] has listed a number of those commonly known. My friend Bimu was in possession of a remedy which had to be taken by the patient during a menstruation period and which ensured the birth of a boy. "No one", he said, "would ask for a medicine to ensure the birth of a girl."

847 [842] [789]

Conversely, amulets are worn as contraceptives, and two different methods are used to induce abortion. One of these is to take drugs orally and the other is the highly dangerous method of piercing the womb with a stick inserted through the vagina. I have heard of the latter method being followed only by girls who wished to escape detection and who therefore could not ask anyone for medicine. Married women who resort to abortion are usually those who have already given birth to a large number of children. In one case which had fatal results for the mother she wished to avoid having a seventh child; another attempt which resulted in a serious illness for the mother, but which was otherwise successful, was made by a woman who had already had ten children.

842 843 [192]

Santals are fully aware of the connection between coitus and conception. From the time when pregnancy is suspected the child begins to exert its influence over the life of the home. A pregnant woman is called *peṭi*, this being the common Bengali term, but here too the Santal love of figurative speech finds full play, and other common ways of referring to pregnancy are to speak of a "full body" or a "heavy body" or to say that the woman is now "two souls". Many of the restrictions enjoined on the woman are due to the physical dangers that surround her during the period and at its climax. These dangers may be brought about not only through natural causes but also by the action of malignant spirits. Thus it is dangerous for a pregnant woman to go anywhere when the sun is directly overhead, nor does she go anywhere alone at sunset. She should not cross a river, though some of my informants affirmed that this prohibition applies only during a first pregnancy. She may not sit on the narrow ledge surrounding the house with her legs

[1] *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. X, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, Pt. II, "Santal Medicine".

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

844 evil eye. Most of the subsequent proceedings centre round the child.

783 The word *chaṭiar* is used both in connection with birth
•192 ceremonial and the later initiation. It is connected with the Hindi *chut*, which means "pollution", but the ceremonial stands not only for the removal of uncleanness but also for the reception, of the new member into society. The ceremonial uncleanness resulting from birth is shared by the whole village, and no
783 religious festival may be held until it has been removed. The
846 house in which the birth has occurred is the centre of the pollution, and none of the other villagers will eat or drink there while it is in operation. If anyone is wearing a charm against illness he
[789] removes it before entering the courtyard of the house, lest the charm lose its power. Although all the ceremonies must be completed within a month after the birth of the child, the actual dates may be modified by a variety of considerations. If a festival is due the ceremonies will be advanced rather than delay or abandon the festival. During the cultivation season they may be either advanced or delayed in order to suit the convenience of work in the fields. The normal day for the *chaṭiar* is on the fifth day after the birth of a boy and on the third day after the birth of a girl. The essential elements in the removal of pollution are shaving and bathing. The villagers all gather together in the courtyard, and first of all the barber—one of the villagers, a Santal—shaves the village officials, then all the men present and lastly the father of the child. The newborn child is then carried by the midwife to the barber, who cuts five locks from the child's head: two from the front, one from each side and one from the middle of the back of the head. These locks are placed in a leaf cup pending their disposal. When the shaving has been completed the men go to the nearest bathing place and bathe themselves. On their return to the house the midwife takes all the women down to bathe, and she carries the arrow that was used for cutting the umbilical cord. Two pieces of string are attached to the arrow; one of these is used to tie up in a bundle the child's hair, and at the bathing place the hairs are detached and floated away on the water. The second string is soaked in oil and turmeric and tied round the child's waist; there it remains until it is worn out, when it is always replaced by another. When the women return from the bathing place the mother sips some cowdung and water that has been prepared by the midwife and rubs some of the mixture on her head. Then three leaf cups are filled with a paste made from sun-dried rice and water. The con-

St Culshaw M-5 - (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

a new symbolism and is fostered by a new ritual. The central act of corporate worship on Sunday, springing from a tradition that is more sabbatarian than sacramental, has taken hold of the imagination of the people. Babulal describes the visit of a missionary to Barikul on a Sunday: "At about two in the afternoon the bell sounded for the Christians to praise the Holy Name of the Heavenly Father. Everyone knew that our *mañjhi haṛam*[1] had arrived, or the bell would not have been sounded so early. A second bell followed according to custom. All the Christians gathered, and first as we entered the church we prayed in our minds for strength. The *mañjhi haṛam* read out a song and we all sang it together, after which we all knelt and followed his prayer. When there was something in the prayer with which we heartily agreed we said to ourselves: 'Heavenly Father, let it be!' Then we heard the Sixteenth Chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, and from it he spoke many words for strengthening us and gave us good advice. At the end we sang again and after prayers we came out of the church. As we stood on the verandah we greeted the *mañjhi haṛam* and had sweet conversation together. He asked some of us elders a few questions: 'What is the state of mind of the villagers? Why do they not accept Jesus?' He also asked: 'What is the state of the evening daily prayers in the village and how goes the Class Meeting?'[2] We told him: 'The people of the village are only drunkards, and as to that we are also at fault, for we have had one or two drunkards amongst us and we have not tried to work hard for Jesus Christ. As for the second thing, evening prayers are being held in a different house each evening; it is not possible for us all to gather every evening. The Class Meeting is going very well. We are hoping that by its influence we shall be able to get rid of drinking and other evils amongst us. We have made a rule amongst ourselves about drinking. If anyone is found drinking we shall fine him five *siki*.[3] If it happens three times we shall fine him five rupees. Then if he continues we shall bring it to the notice of our *marañ nacke* or *mañjhi haṛam* and drive him out from us. We shall not sit with him no matter what he wishes to do, whether at a birth or *chaṭiar* or marriage; nor shall we go to his house. Then we shall be

[1] Babulal uses a curious phrase here for the missionary. It is not in general use. Literally the "old headman" or "chief headman", the term is in general use to designate the original founder of a village. A missionary is generally *Padri Sahib*.

[2] This Methodist term occurs in the manuscript. It is familiar to the community.

[3] A *siki* is equivalent to four annas.